

RECLAIMING HOLY SPIRIT EXPERIENCE IN
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

DISCOVERING THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE MAINLINE CHURCH: A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH

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The context of this project was Kardia United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, CA. Charismatic/Pentecostal approaches to Holy Spirit ministry may cause discomfort among mainline Christians seeking the Holy Spirit. If we provide a more contextualized process using discussion, teaching and waiting prayer, mainline Christians may have increased openness toward Holy Spirit experience. I designed a two-day workshop called “Life in the Spirit” to help participants learn about and experience the Holy Spirit. The workshop resulted in positive Holy Spirit experiences while providing insight into how mainline churches might transition into a richer engagement with the Holy Spirit.

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This work would have been impossible without my context associates, foremost of whom is my wife, Suzana. Your willing aid in some tedious but enriching labor saved me much time and provided great insight. Thanks to Menette, Young Kee and Shenne for contributing in your own unique and invaluable ways.

Many thanks also to my professional associates, Dr. Phil Kay for giving me the seed of insight that guided my process, Dr. Edward Suh for challenging me and giving me a balancing perspective, Dr. Bruce Markham for being a constant encouragement, and Dr. Woong-Min Kim, my father, for grounding me in my Wesleyan heritage; thank you to all.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the people of Kardia United Methodist Church. I have been your pastor for ten years, but it is you who have taught and challenged me in so many ways. You have always been good sports about the sometimes crazy-seeming things I have wanted to try. I only push for us to become more and more Spirit-filled because I know full well the goodness of the seed that was planted in this soil. I am confident that together, we will be able to see and enjoy the fruit over the years.

I also dedicate this project to my family: my wife Suzana and my children Naila and Garrett. You have sacrificed along with me, and I hope that a legacy of spiritual empowerment will enable you to fulfill all the calling of God on your lives.

Finally, this work belongs to the Lord, Jesus Christ. It was his initiative that prompted me to attempt it. It was his grace that enabled me to complete it. I believe whatever purpose he had for me in doing this he will fulfill in his time.

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INTRODUCTION

The past five years for me have been a pursuit of the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. The impetus for this has been a lifelong desire to see the Christianity of the Bible come to life in my own time and context. The Bible portrays a God who acts mightily and providentially in the world and on behalf of his people. We read stories of people who, by faith were able to experience supernatural events and interactions with God, people who were used by God to perform great exploits. This is true both of the Old and New Testaments.

It seems to be the case that the primary conduit between God in heaven and his workings in the world is God's Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit who, in coming upon someone, allowed that person to prophesy or perform miracles or win great battles. In the New Testament, Jesus inaugurated his ministry with a baptism of the Holy Spirit, after which he performed miracles throughout Judea.

From the time I first gave my life to Jesus Christ, trusting in him for salvation, I have been a voracious reader of Scripture. But one of the things that troubled me was that my experience of Christianity and the church seemed anemic compared to the vibrantly supernatural activity of God in Scripture. That is not to say that evidently un-supernatural works of the Holy Spirit are invalid or even inferior. I put great stock into that interior work of the Spirit to comfort, guide, convict and transform a person, much more than

outward miracles. But the outward miracles also have a place in my faith, because they have a place in Scripture.

The present study is my attempt to address this personal longing and the disparity that I see in my context between Biblical and contemporary expressions of faith and the church. I want to acknowledge and embrace the evangelical Methodist tradition that I was raised in, valuing the Protestant understanding of salvation as coming by faith in Jesus Christ, the primacy of Scripture in the life of a Christian, and the Wesleyan call to social and personal holiness. But I also want to reclaim the power of the Holy Spirit in my life, embracing the prophetic, miraculous elements that are normal in Scripture.

This document will lay down several foundational chapters leading up to an intervention that I designed to be used in my own congregation. The foundational chapters are ministry focus, biblical, historical and theological, leading up to a final chapter dealing with my project. The following is a breakdown of the chapters.

Chapter 1: Ministry Focus

In chapter one, I will describe the ministry focus of the project: the congregation of which I am the senior pastor, along with the surrounding community. This foundation determined to a large degree the problem I articulated and the methods I proposed as potential solutions. I also look more closely at my own spiritual history and discover that this project is not a separate journey but a significant juncture that is in line with the trajectory of my life, one that began before I was even born.

Chapter 2: Biblical Foundations

In chapter two, I will examine two passages of Scripture, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New. These passages serve as guideposts in my exploration and analysis about what it means to receive the Holy Spirit or be baptized in the Spirit. This seemed to me to be a critical event in the life of the believer, but one which interpreters have struggled to understand.

Chapter 3: Historical Foundations

In chapter three, I look back to the historical church to learn how Christians throughout the past, particularly those who were part of the Wesleyan revival, interacted with and understood the Holy Spirit and his work. In doing so, I discovered precious pieces of my own heritage as a Methodist. There was a rich trove of stories and theologies at work in the Methodist revival that were more akin to Pentecostalism in many ways than it was to the modern-day iteration of Methodism.

Chapter 4: Theological Foundations

In chapter four, I move into the theological aspect of this historical segment of the church to rediscover what John Wesley's theology of the Holy Spirit was. The surprising finding for me as a lifelong Methodist was that there is a nearly continuous theological thread that runs from Methodist through the Holiness Movement to Pentecostalism. I then explore how Pentecostal theologies have changed and modernized to remain relevant in contemporary society, perhaps more so than other theological disciplines in a world that

seeks and is fascinated by spirituality but disenfranchised with traditional expressions of the faith.

Chapter Five: Project Analysis

Chapter five describes the design and implementation of my project, as well as my analysis and conclusions. The preceding chapters formed the foundation upon which I built my final project, a workshop in the church designed to help mainline evangelical Christians learn about and encounter God's Holy Spirit in fresh ways. It is my belief that I am heading in the right direction, and that using gentler methodologies than the ones typically deployed by Charismatic ministries could be a helpful complement to the larger-setting, aggressively supernatural meetings that are the only real access point mainline Christians have had if they desired exposure to unfamiliar but compelling Pentecostal¹ practices and experiences.

¹ Even though I capitalize "Charismatic" and "Pentecostal" and understand that these terms refer to specific movements, I am using them in the more general sense of Holy-Spirit-oriented spirituality that includes supernatural elements and spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and healing. My reason for this is that I believe traditional distinctions are being blurred and those terms are not as narrow in definition as they might have been. I keep the capitalization to prevent confusion with the normal usage of "charismatic" and because "pentecostal" does not have a significant usage in mainstream English.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe my local church as my immediate context, my church's surrounding neighborhood as the extended context, and my own journey as a minister. In examining these three narratives, I will look for a convergence that will point to the theme and hypothesis of my doctoral project. The theme of my project is facilitating Holy Spirit experience in a mainline church context.

Immediate Context

Since 2008, I have been the senior pastor at Kardia United Methodist Church in West Los Angeles, located at 1637 Butler Ave, Los Angeles, California. This congregation is a recent merger between a small, predominantly Caucasian congregation which was set to close and a predominantly 2nd generation Korean-American congregation that came into the existing property to form one new congregation. There are presently 117 adult members with forty youth and children. The average weekly attendance runs about eighty adults and thirty children. The three outstanding characteristics of this immediate context are that it is increasingly multiethnic, it is a United Methodist Church, and it is experiencing a spiritual-Charismatic renewal.

Multiethnic Church Restart

The church was somewhat of a restart in 2007, the year before I was appointed as the senior pastor. It was originally called First United Methodist Church (UMC) of West Los Angeles, and at the time of the restart, it consisted of about twenty elderly Caucasian members and was in danger of being closed. A Korean-American 2nd generation ministry named Ascension Ministry, which was the English ministry of Los Angeles Korean United Methodist Church, left their parent church to merge with First UMC. About sixty or so adults and their families from the Korean-American group merged with the predominantly Caucasian church.

The beautiful thing about this arrangement was that from the very beginning of the restart of this congregation, it was multiethnic and multicultural. There were very few issues arising from the merger of the two congregations. Although worship style changed from what the original members of First UMC were accustomed to, they gamely went along with many of the changes, glad to be a vibrant church again after facing the possibility of closure. At this point, one in five attenders is not Korean-American but Caucasian, African-American, or a mix of other ethnicities, including mixed-race, Persian, Hispanic and Pan-Asian. This ratio is increasing every year.

United Methodist

The most salient aspect of being a United Methodist Church in this day and age, even more than theology, ecclesiology or history, is that this is a denomination in decline. An article on the denomination's website predicts, "The United Methodist Church has only fifteen years to reverse its decline in the United States if it is to have a sustainable

future, an economist warned church leaders...unless things change soon, the denomination in coming decades will not have enough U.S. churches to pay for its connectional structures.”¹

This constant threat of decline and closure looms over the denomination and is an undercurrent in the life of the local church, particularly in the Annual Conference we are in, the California-Pacific Annual Conference. While this has caused much concern for denominational leadership and restructuring of our organization, there is a positive effect. I believe there is an openness and a desperation that is growing in our denomination that makes us more open to new ideas and ways of doing things, including being more open to the Holy Spirit.

That openness has a basis in historical Wesleyan theology and practice. It is clear from John Wesley’s sermons and writings that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was a Methodist distinctive. In his second discourse on “The Witness of the Spirit,” Wesley writes concerning this doctrine,

It more nearly concerns the Methodists, so called, clearly to understand, explain, and defend this doctrine; because it is one grand part of the testimony which God has given them to bear to all mankind. It is by this peculiar blessing upon them in searching the Scriptures, confirmed by the experience of his children, that this great evangelical truth has been recovered, which had been or many years well nigh lost and forgotten.”²

Wesley’s insistence that a true Christian would know internally that they were indeed saved because of an inner witness of the Holy Spirit was at odds with his critics who had

¹ United Methodist Communications, “Economist: Church in Crisis but Hope Remains,” *The United Methodist Church*, accessed April 29, 2016, <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/economist-united-methodist-church-in-crisis>.

² John Wesley, *Sermons, on Several Occasions* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999), sermon 11.

a more doctrinal understanding of justification rather than an experiential one. That openness to the experience of the Holy Spirit, particularly in sanctification as a second work of grace,³ created the environment out of which the Holiness and Pentecostal movements would arise in later centuries.

Holy Spirit Renewal

For the past few years, Kardia has been on a journey of seeking the Holy Spirit in a more experiential way. The types of experiences we have had include speaking in tongues, prophecy, deliverance, and healing. The reason for this direction was my own sense that we were operating out of our own power as a church. I felt that our methods and perspectives were, to a great degree, worldly. I had a hunger to experience God's power working in us. I will quickly highlight some of the key moments in this journey over the past five or so years.

In January of 2011, I invited Gord Whyte, a minister in Kelowna, British Columbia, to speak at our all church retreat about the Holy Spirit. Pastor Gord has ministered internationally in the power of the Holy Spirit. He is connected in his early days of ministry with the Toronto revival. In many ways, he was the ideal person to ease the church into the things of the Spirit due to his calm demeanor and teaching orientation.

At that retreat, Pastor Gord taught about the Holy Spirit and ministered impartation to the congregation. He had us all stand in line as he walked through, laying hands on people and prophesying over them. This was the first time I learned what a

³ Eddie L. Hyatt, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity: A 21st Century Look at Church History from a Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspective* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2002), 105.

catcher was, as I was recruited to be one. I stood ready behind the people Pastor Gord was praying for as people began to fall down under the power of the Holy Spirit. I did my best to catch them as they fell! This was a first experience for our congregation with this kind of ministry.

There were also many who did not experience falling under the power of the Spirit. Many were skeptical, and suspected people were lying down under the power of suggestion. The move of the Holy Spirit in the congregation would not be without some controversy. There were some who left the church because they were uncomfortable with the direction we were heading in, but the core leaders and members were open and willing to explore a greater filling of the Holy Spirit. We sensed that this was something we needed, even if it was uncomfortable.

We invited several other ministers who operated in the power of the Holy Spirit. In November 2014, we had a retreat where our guest speaker was Dr. Charles Kraft, a Fuller Seminary professor with whom I had studied. He took the church through inner healing training. In June 2015, Pastors Jeanie and David Richardson led workshops on prophecy and hearing God's voice. At the end of the workshop, they prayed for some of the attendees to receive the gift of tongues, and a few received. In March 2016, we had Stuart and Cathy Greer give a workshop on deliverance. Through all these experiences, I believe our congregation was being equipped in healing and prophetic ministry.

Extended Context

Kardia UMC is in a mixed-use area with residential, commercial and government establishments all within the same compact zone. A police station is right next door. A

post office is across the street, and a public library is a few doors down. Santa Monica Boulevard is a major thoroughfare that runs through the neighborhood less than a block north of the church. There are restaurants, shops, hair salons, gas stations, and independent movie theaters within a half-mile of the church.

Interspersed around all of these are a variety of residential units, including single-family homes, two-story walk ups and luxury condominiums. The latter are increasingly dominating the residential landscape and there are fewer and fewer single-family homes to be seen in the neighborhood. Development of new condominiums seems to be happening every few blocks.

The name of the neighborhood is Sawtelle. In the early 1900s, the Sawtelle area proper was originally farm country on the outskirts of Los Angeles. The first residents of the area were Japanese immigrant farmers who worked the barley and celery fields, as well as provided gardening services to the white-only neighborhoods of Westwood, Bel Air and Brentwood.⁴ Though many of the original Japanese residents have since moved away, some remain and give the neighborhood a distinctly Japanese-influenced character, although this is rapidly giving way to more of a Pan-Asian, multi-ethnic influx.

The crown jewel of the Sawtelle neighborhood is Sawtelle Japantown, the Westside cousin to downtown Los Angeles' Little Tokyo. This strip of shops and restaurants has a variety of trendy establishments that attract Angelenos from all over the city. Specialty ramen shops like Tsujita will have long lines at lunch time. Most of the

⁴ Jack Fujimoto, *Sawtelle: West Los Angeles's Japantown* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), introduction. Kindle.

restaurants are Japanese in flavor, but many of the new influx of restaurants offer more of a variety, from gourmet burgers to Korean fusion.

Demographic Description

I used MissionInsite, a demographics analysis service specifically geared toward churches, to get demographic data of the Sawtelle area surrounding Kardia UMC. I used their QuickInsite report format, which provides a snapshot of the demographics of the area.⁵ I used a custom-drawn area for the report with Wilshire Blvd. to the north, Olympic Blvd. to the south, Bundy Dr. to the west and Sepulveda Blvd. to the east.

In terms of racial demographics, the area is 58% Caucasian, 19% Asian, 15% Hispanic, 3% African-American and 5% other. Of that “other,” there is a significant population of Persians, many of whom are Persian-Jews. The feel of the area is one of significant diversity, and there is a larger percentage of Asians than in other parts of the city of Los Angeles. In terms of multiethnic ministry, this area is a high-potential candidate.

One of the notable features of MissionInsite is that it does not simply provide raw statistical data about a demographic area. A very revealing portion of the report is called Mosaic Segments. This part of the report not only considers a demographic population group’s age or life stage, but also their attitudes and values as well.

Most residents in the study area are what the report describes as “Young, City Solos – Urban Edge,” who make up 59% of the population. This is extremely skewed in

⁵ “MissionInsite QuickInsite Report Custom Geography” (MissionInsite, April 22, 2016).

comparison to the same population as a percentage of all of California, which is 3.4%. It is a major distinction of the neighborhood.

MissionInsite describes this Mosaic Segment in the following way: “Urban Edge are a collection of unmarried singles living in the funky neighborhoods of the nation’s big cities.”⁶ This group tends to be liberal, unchurched, and upwardly mobile. They are risk-takers and at the forefront of the latest trends in culture. They are digitally savvy and use the internet as their primary lifeline to the world.

In terms of spirituality, “Young, City Solos” tend to be far less Evangelical Christian but far more interested in spirituality than the rest of California. Only 30% identify as Evangelical Christian compared with 35% of the state. And 51% identify themselves as spiritual persons, compared with 45% of the state as a whole. This is a challenging mission field, but I believe it is one with a great deal of potential for more experiential Christianity.

My Ministry Journey

I was born in 1975 in Masan, South Korea. I grew up in that area until the age of two when I emigrated to the United States to join my parents, who had emigrated before me. I am the elder of two children, having a younger sister. I identify as a 2nd generation Korean-American.

⁶ MissionInsite, *New Mosaic 2010: Household Segments From Experian* (Nottingham, UK: Experian, 2011), 137, accessed May 14, 2016, http://missioninsite.com/PDF_Files/Mosaic_Descriptions%20Group-Segments_%20USA%20Final%20Cover%20081312.pdf.

I am a 3rd generation Methodist pastor. My grandfather was the first in our family to become a Christian, and he became a well-known Korean Methodist pastor and revivalist in South Korea. My father and mother immigrated to the United States from Korea in the early 1970s. My father became a United Methodist pastor. He would eventually become the District Superintendent of the Hawaii District in the California-Pacific Annual Conference. He is currently retired, but active in many boards and committees, such as the Korean Caucus in the denomination as well as in the Western Jurisdiction. My uncle is also a United Methodist pastor who is currently active and ministering in Southern California. My wife has recently been commissioned as an Elder in the United Methodist Church and is the associate pastor at our church. All this reminds me that I have a strong and deep rooting in a Wesleyan heritage, something that I view quite positively.

For the purposes of this paper, I will concentrate on those experiences in my professional and educational career that pertain most directly to the direction of this doctoral project. I do need to clarify that in addition to my Wesleyan heritage, my faith experience in my youth was staunchly evangelical and conservative in orientation. I believed in salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone. The focus of much of our concern as youth was making sure that we were going to heaven after we died. The normal experience of church was largely based on an educational model with weekly Sunday school and Bible studies. However, the most significant experiences of my seminary education and professional experience, particularly over the past five years, have been increasingly Holy Spirit oriented.

Fuller Theological Seminary

I enrolled in the Master of Divinity program at Fuller in the Fall of 1999. Even though I was in the School of Theology, I took many of my electives in what was known at the time as the School of World Mission. Professor Charles Kraft was teaching several classes in the school that dealt with inner healing and deliverance. In a class called Power Encounter, Dr. Kraft would perform inner healing and deliverance on volunteer seminary students. That class exposed me to things that I had read about in the Bible but had never experienced or been taught in my evangelical upbringing. We learned about the authority we had as Christians to cast out demons. We learned about the supernatural dimension of Christianity. Our eyes were opened to the reality of spiritual warfare.

In a class called Power Encounter, I learned about the concept of generational sins and how they could affect us today. One day, I was driving to the church where I was serving as youth minister at the time. I decided to practice what I had learned, and so I declared from my car to the spirit world that I was free from any generational curses that were upon me and I renounced any of the sins that my ancestors had committed. Immediately, the Holy Spirit came upon me, and I began to speak in tongues in what seemed like not an earthly language but a heavenly language. It was by grace that I was able to drive the rest of the way to church, praying in tongues the whole way!

Youth Ministry and Charismatic Growth

I served as a youth minister immediately upon entering seminary in 1999 at my uncle's church in Monterey Park, California. It was a small family church, but I loved the youth there and was passionate about imparting Christ to them. During that time, I was

also thrust into leadership of the regional Korean United Methodist youth summer retreat, which had been an annual tradition for decades, but which was lacking leadership the year I began youth ministry.

The first year I led the retreat, I was desperate to find a speaker to headline it. Through my wife's connections, we invited a pastor named Sam Song. I had no idea at the time, but Pastor Sam moved in supernatural healing and power gifts. It was a shock to us when he began preaching boldly about the power of God while healing students during the sessions. One of the youth leaders turned to me and said, "This is definitely not Methodist." I did not know it at the time but perhaps this was more Methodist than we understood. I sensed shock and resistance in many of the leaders and students, but also excitement and awe in others. There were about 70 youth at that first meeting.

For the next three years, that youth retreat continued to grow. It grew to 100 students the next year, then 130 the year after that and continued to grow even more, at which time I was already phasing myself out of it. We changed the name to Flood LA, a name they continued to use long after I had left youth ministry. I had a vision like Isaiah's of God pouring out his Spirit on a desert land and life springing up. I saw Los Angeles as a desert, and I knew we needed God's Holy Spirit. The retreat became increasingly spiritually expressive in character. Passionate worship with students dancing and shouting became the norm, even though such expression was completely foreign to us United Methodists at that time. Amazing Spirit-filled leaders arose out of that ministry, many of whom continue to minister today.

This was a foundational experience for me, because it set the tone of me partnering with ministers from more Holy Spirit oriented church traditions. Ever since

that time, wherever I have served, God has sent a partner in ministry to work closely with me who is of a Pentecostal/Charismatic background. I believe this is evidence of a call on my life to reunite the Pentecostal/Charismatic and Wesleyan streams of the church which have drifted apart in the last century.

Kardia United Methodist Church

As I mentioned earlier, I was appointed to my current church in 2008. The first three years or so constituted a season of hard plowing and laying spiritual foundations. The congregation had to stabilize and heal after a merger that, while relatively smooth, still brought about some turbulence. However, the past three or so years have been the singularly most supernatural years of my life and ministry.

The key season was at the beginning of 2013. On January 25-27, we had a revival planned with a guest speaker named Gord Whyte. In preparation for that revival and to seek vision for the church at the beginning of the year, I went away to fast and pray for four days at a prayer mountain operated by Grace Ministries International. God met me in an unexpected way there.

I was praying for vision on the first night when God convicted me that it was not vision I needed right then, but an inner work in myself. He revealed that I had two fears that were hindering my work for him, the fear of man and the fear of failure. I prayed for freedom from fear. I looked to the Scriptures to find inspiration in courageous Biblical people. I came on the story of David and meditated on his faith and courage in the face of lions, bears and Goliath. I prayed that night, "Lord, make me like David."

The next morning, I was walking around the grounds when I came across a Hispanic man sitting by the path. I approached him to strike up a conversation and introduced myself as Steve. It became apparent that this man was very prophetic, and he began to reveal things about my life that he could not have known. His name was Bernie and he was a pastor who was spending an extended time living on the prayer mountain. Throughout our conversation, which lasted for two hours, he kept calling me “David.” I corrected him once. I corrected him again. The third time he called me “David,” I said,

“You keep calling me ‘David,’ but my name is ‘Steve.’”

He acknowledged my correction, looked pensive for a moment, and then replied, “You know why I keep calling you, ‘David’? Because you have the heart of David.”

I was stunned. Was God answering my prayer from the night before? I told him that just the previous night, I had been praying that God would make me like David. We continued to fellowship throughout my fast and he continued to reveal the things of God as well as the secrets of my heart to me. I told him that we were having a revival that weekend at church and invited him to come. He said he would.

The revival that weekend was supercharged with the power of the Holy Spirit. Many people fell in the Spirit, while others were guided to rest on the ground in the presence of the Spirit by Pastor Gord. It was not completely clear that everyone was lying down “under the power,” but it was evident that some people were quite involuntarily falling under the power. This aspect of the revival services was controversial and created a bit of a division in the congregation. A few people left the church because of the

direction this revival seemed to point the church in. But it was an important part of the process of spiritual awakening God was taking us through.

On the third day of the revival, on Sunday morning, Pastor Gord preached. I noticed that there was a new person in the congregation, an African-American woman who had been invited by one of our members. Her name was Menette. After service, I noticed that she sat for a while after everyone else had left. Only she, her friend and I remained in the sanctuary. I approached her as she got up to say hello. I introduced myself as Steve, and she told me how she had been arrested by the Holy Spirit during the worship service. She told me that God had given her a vision some time before of just one word, “Westside,” and when she came to our church, she realized our church was what “Westside” referred to (our church meets in the Westside of Los Angeles). The strange thing was, she kept referring to me as David throughout our conversation. This seemed eerily familiar. I did not bother to correct her. She called me “David,” three times. After the third time, she paused, look straight at me, and said,

“What name did your momma give you?”

I responded, “My name is ‘Steve.’”

She said, “I knew your name was ‘Steve,’ but I called you ‘David’ three times because you have the heart of David.”

I said, “You know, another prophet said the same thing to me just this week, and there he is now!” At that precise moment, Pastor Bernie walked through the door of the sanctuary.

I invited Pastor Bernie over to the little group and introduced him to Menette, who then instructed the group to pray over me. What happened next was that as they

surrounded me and prayed, I felt a powerful mantle of anointing coming down and resting upon me. I began to weep as the prophetess prayed over me many prayers of favor and blessing. She anointed me in the Spirit from the crown of my head down to my feet. I had never felt the tangible presence and anointing of the Holy Spirit in that manner before.

After they finished praying for me, I was what I can only describe as drunk in the Spirit. I could barely walk straight. I staggered out of the sanctuary and into our fellowship hall where many of the congregation were eating lunch together. People immediately noticed that something had happened to me and they asked me what the matter was. All I could say was, “I just got blasted by the Holy Spirit. You should go up and see.” Many of the young adults ran upstairs to the sanctuary and I heard they were all prayed for and were touched powerfully by the Holy Spirit.

This experience changed me and my ministry. I had a new spiritual name, “David.” I had become freed from the fear of man and fear of failure. I knew I could not fail with God, and that it did not matter who approved or disapproved, but that I had to be faithful to God. From this point on, supernatural and providential testimonies began to be a regular occurrence among a solid core of our members who were open to the supernatural move of the Holy Spirit. Healing and deliverance began to happen. God began to orchestrate wonderful provisions for the real needs of our people. God drew new people to our church who were of diverse backgrounds. For example, an Iranian family seeking religious asylum from Iran came to our church and we walked with them through a three-year process of receiving asylum. They became baptized members of our church.

God continued to confirm and reconfirm the new thing he was doing with fresh visitations. Once, after service some months later, Menette and her mother stayed until the sanctuary emptied and then approached me to pray for me. Menette's mother has a prophetic anointing, and they had me lie down on the ground and spoke prophetic words over me.

As I was resting there on my back, suddenly the sensation of shooting forward as in a fast roller-coaster came over me. It felt as if I were going into "hyperspace," as in a Star Wars movie. I felt my back pressing strongly into the ground. It felt like I was going to go through the ground. I could not move. Then it felt as if a three-hundred-pound man sat on my chest, and this pressure expelled all the wind out of my lungs and I was forced to cry out and began shouting loudly. It felt as if God pressed his hand upon me at that moment to remind me that his anointing and presence were very real. That was the most powerful physical experience of the Holy Spirit that I have had so far. The effect of it was to encourage me that these things that were happening were indeed very real.

I am continuing to walk out this anointing. Just recently, God has been working in me especially in the areas of purity, power, and the ability to transfer impartation. On Pentecost Sunday, 2016, after reading the account in Acts 2, I invited the congregation to be activated in prophetic anointing. Several people offered prophetic words to the congregation.

After that time of sharing, I invited anyone who wanted an impartation of the Holy Spirit to come forward. Most of the congregation came forward and stood to receive impartation. I, my wife and a couple of other church members who had experience in impartation began to pray for the people. For the first time in my experience someone

whom I prayed and prophesied over fell down under the power of the Holy Spirit. When this person fell with a gasp, I felt power burst out from her. I was overcome with the Holy Spirit as well but continued to pray for others.

This was a pivotal experience for me because it solidified my faith to be a channel through whom God can give an impartation of his Holy Spirit to others through the laying on of hands. I found prophetic revelation was coming to me extremely fluidly as I was praying for people. Not only I but my wife experienced this powerfully as well. A woman she prayed for testified to me that as my wife prayed for her, she felt fire in her hands and the power of the Holy Spirit come upon her.

The Synergy

I see a providential synergy in three major areas between my church, our neighborhood and my own ministry journey. They basically point to a convergence of a multicultural, Wesleyan ministry operating in the power of the Holy Spirit in a setting of young, urban professionals. I also see a calling to minister in the United Methodist Church context for the purpose of reclaiming Holy Spirit experience in a way that is authentic, organic, but also Wesleyan.

As shown earlier, the Sawtelle neighborhood of our church is only 50% Caucasian, and there is a sizable proportion of Asians in the area. Our church is 80% Korean-American but increasingly incorporating Caucasian and African-Americans. There is a synergy in terms of ethnic makeup between the church and the neighborhood. Not only that, but as a 2nd generation Korean-American, I as the pastor have an inherent

advantage in connecting with minorities, while my upbringing in American education and culture allow me to connect with the majority culture.

As United Methodists, we have a rich heritage in experiential religion, particularly in experiencing the Holy Spirit. This Wesleyan emphasis on experiential religion I believe is a good fit for the secular, liberal characteristic of the young, urban professionals in our neighborhood. Although they have largely rejected conservative evangelicalism, they still identify themselves as spiritual.

I believe this makes our neighborhood potentially open to more supernatural experiences of the church. They may be turned off by institutional religion, but perhaps they would be open to experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit, the testimony of prophecy or the reality of healing and deliverance. Add to this the Wesleyan heritage of disciple-making in small groups, personal holiness and social justice and action, and I believe you have the makings of an expression of Christianity that could be relevant for our neighborhood. I believe young people are hungry for the real, authentic experience of God and the supernatural, just as much as they are turned off by dead doctrinal expressions or artificial entertainment-influenced expressions of the faith.

The experiences of the Holy Spirit and impartation that I have received over the past few years and continue to receive have prepared me to operate in a power evangelism mode in my neighborhood, in partnership with my congregation who has been on a parallel journey with me. As God draws more people to experience his real presence and as we proclaim and demonstrate the good news of Jesus Christ, a major need I see is the need to have a methodology for Holy Spirit impartation or Spirit

baptism. We need something that is contextually relevant as we do not want to repeat the difficulties of our past efforts at Spirit impartation.

Conclusion

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in power that I and my congregation is experiencing could be for the purpose of reaching our neighborhood. As we continue to see new converts to Jesus Christ, it will be necessary to be prepared with a methodology to help them experience the Holy Spirit, which is God's presence and power in and upon a believer for spiritual formation and effective witness. Consequently, my project theme will be facilitating Holy Spirit experience in a mainline, Methodist church in urban Los Angeles. My hypothesis is that facilitating Holy Spirit experience in a more contextualized manner will be effective in reaching young, unchurched urbanites, and hopefully lead to a vibrant congregation that is being effective in evangelism and witness.

To this end I envision creating a tool that will be used as part of our disciple-making system. The primary purpose of this tool will be to help facilitate believers who may not be familiar with Pentecostal or Charismatic modes of spirituality to have initial and further experiences of God's Holy Spirit that enhance their love for God and people, their experience of sanctification, and supernatural power and boldness to be witnesses of Jesus to the broader culture. The methodology I plan to adopt will be a workshop centered around Biblical discussion and waiting prayer. The data I will collect will consist of survey questionnaires, journals and focus group interviews.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter I will examine two primary passages, one from the OT and one from the NT, to explore their relevance to the topic of receiving the Holy Spirit and how that relates to conversion and Christian witness. The OT passage is Numbers 11:16-30, and the NT passage is Acts 8:4-25. Both are narratives of Holy Spirit impartation events. I am especially interested in practical applications in terms of how to facilitate a Holy Spirit baptism experience in a present-day local-church context. While I do not expect to find anything so specific as a step-by-step guide in the Scriptures, I do think it will be helpful to look at two case studies of what may be analogous experiences to a post-Pentecost understanding of Holy Spirit baptism.

Preview of Numbers 11:16-30

The Numbers passage is couched in the context of a leadership crisis for Moses. The people are complaining, and he is feeling overburdened by the responsibility of leading the people. We find that God provides a solution to Moses' frustration by initiating a remarkable redistribution of his Spirit from Moses to seventy elders. This has implications for what is a prophetic-eschatological desire, expressed by Moses, but confirmed by the prophets and the NT, as God's own desire to put his Spirit on all his

people. This is ultimately the solution that addresses the difficulty of spiritual leadership in service to a people driven by more worldly cravings.

There is also a twist to the narrative as not only does God put his Spirit on seventy elders who were present at the commissioning ceremony, but also on two who were not present at the meeting but in the camp. The anomalous impartation of God's Spirit on Eldad and Medad pave the way to an understanding of God's prerogative in distributing his Spirit as widely as possible, even at the expense of protocol. Our rigid concern with proper procedure in the things of the Spirit may sometimes pit us against the uncontrollable move of God's Spirit.

I then look at the manifestation that the elders exhibit when they receive God's Spirit. Their response is prophetic, but we will study a bit closer what that means in the context of our passage, and what that might mean for our expectations of spiritual manifestations today. In a broad sense, receiving the Holy Spirit turns people into God's prophets, or at the very least, makes them prophetic.

Preview of Acts 8:4-25

In the Acts passage, my main concern has to do with the dilemma of the Samaritan believers. Scholars debate the reason for the delay between the Samaritans conversion and their subsequent reception of the Holy Spirit. The dilemma has to do with whether the Samaritans were truly converted at their belief and baptism, and if they were, whether they somehow received the Holy Spirit at that point, or in fact went without receiving the Holy Spirit until they received it through Peter and John. This will

eventually lead me to some surprising conclusions about the role of the Holy Spirit and the experience of the Spirit at the moment of Christian conversion.

But before reaching those conclusions, I briefly survey the various explanations that are most prominent concerning the Samaritan riddle. We will examine a variety of creative options, ranging from source critical ideas to those rooted in historical context to Dunn's masterful solution to the dilemma. Getting an overview of the different perspectives will hopefully put us in the best possible position to come to our own understanding, recognizing that most likely not one explanation will be sufficient by itself.

By this point it becomes clearer that Luke's understanding of the Samaritans' conversions is that they were true and legitimate conversions. Against this view Dunn argues the most eloquently and ingeniously. However, I look at his arguments for a deficient conversion and respond to each of them. My eventual premise is that Luke does in fact present the Samaritans' conversions as legitimate.

This has implications for the understanding of the Holy Spirit's role at conversion that may be troubling for those of an orthodox Evangelical or mainline theological background, such as I have. I look at the possibility of a person becoming a genuine Christian with true belief and baptism according to a right understanding of the gospel and yet not having received the Holy Spirit. This seems to be the simplest and most natural way of understanding Luke's own position concerning the Samaritan dilemma. Yet, it does not seem to bother Luke as much as it might bother us today.

As we work through the issues of the Holy Spirit coming upon a person and what that means in relation to a person's conversion, we will see that Luke teaches us valuable

lessons about the nature of conversion and receiving the Spirit. I view these lessons as immensely valuable for today's Christians who may have heard a great deal of doctrine concerning the Spirit, and yet are confused as to the incongruity of their experience with the Spirit. Ultimately, we may see the Spirit coming upon a person as empowering them for witness.

Numbers 11:16-30

Literary/Biblical Context

Churches care a great deal about leadership if the number of books available today on church leadership is any indication. It is probably the case that people also complain a great deal about church leadership. Pastors today bear the brunt of this dynamic. They face both the pressure to lead well and the criticisms of those in their congregations who are dissatisfied with some aspect of their leadership.

This is the context of our passage. It is the first leadership crisis recounted in the book of Numbers, and it will not be the last. This murmuring tradition will be a recurring theme from here to chapter 20. This incident comes after a long section where God gives Moses the law on Mount Sinai and the Israelites finally set out from there.

In the context of our passage, we find that it is not actually all the Israelites who are complaining, but “the rabble among them.”¹ This was a subset of the population and was perhaps related to the non-Israelites who joined the Exodus from Egypt. The King

¹ Numbers 11:4, *New Revised Standard Version*. All Scripture quotations are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version* unless otherwise noted.

James Version refers to them as the “mixt multitude,” but Budd disagrees with this translation as the roots are different between the two words.² Whatever their origin of this rabble, their effect is to instigate a murmuring among the people so that there is a generalized discontent.

Later in the narrative, God responds with a disciplinary provision of too much quail. The people who eat it become ill and many die. It mitigates the seeming unfairness of God that not all the people suffered from the plague that resulted from the excessive meat consumption. We learn in verse 34 that the Israelites only buried those who had the craving for meat, most likely the rabble that began the murmuring in the first place.

The relation of verses 16-30, the section that I am treating in this paper, to the rest of the chapter is that it is couched in the middle of the narrative of the rabble who craved meat. Between the complaining of the people and the disciplinary provision of God at the end of the chapter, we find our story of leadership delegation. The beginning and end of the narrative deal with the people’s complaints. The middle section deals with Moses’ complaint.

Exodus 18:13-27 and the Burden of Leadership

Moses questions YHWH’s treatment of him when he asks, “Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me?” (Nu 11:11). It is telling that even after appointing officers over

² Phillip J. Budd, *Numbers*, vol. 5, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 127.

the people at the advice of his father-in-law, Jethro,³ Moses still feels alone in his leadership of the people.

What this seems to indicate is that the administrative distribution of leadership that Moses enacted in Exodus 18 was not enough to alleviate the burden of spiritual leadership that Moses experienced. We read there that Jethro recommended Moses “look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain” (Ex 18:21). These men helped Moses in the task of judging the people.

Moses’ primary job was to judge disputes between people. He would hear their complaints and then teach the people the will of God concerning that situation. The chosen officers would share in this responsibility. They would hear the minor cases and send more difficult cases up to Moses. This may be something like the American judicial system where we have lower courts where cases begin, but through a process of appeals, can be sent all the way to the Supreme Court. Moses is Israel’s Supreme Court justice.

The question is, did this system satisfy the administrative inefficiency that Jethro was trying to address? I believe it did. Ex 18:26 summarizes the work of the officers of the people with a sense of finality, as if there were no further issues related to this work. Indicative of the efficacy of this system is that Moses feels confident enough to “let his father-in-law depart” (Ex 18:27).

What we find then is that the appointing of the officers, even while it served a judicial function and most likely required wisdom and integrity in the officers, had an effect that was more administrative than spiritual. It simply decreased Moses’ workload.

³ See Exodus 18:13-27 where Jethro advises Moses to delegate the task of judging the people. Moses does as Jethro recommends. “Moses chose able men from all Israel and appointed them as heads over the people, as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens” (v. 25).

Instead of hearing every case that the Israelites brought, he heard only the most difficult or most important. Certainly, this increased the efficiency of the judicial process for the people and for Moses.

Then why do we find Moses still complaining in Nu 11:11? Why does he still perceive the burden of leadership as something he bears alone? I believe we can discover some clues to this in Ex 18:19-20. Jethro counsels Moses, “You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do.” This is unique from the role Moses’ deputies would serve. Whereas the officers of the people heard the complaints of the people and judged between them, Moses has the additional task of bringing people’s cases before God himself. There is a personal access to God that Moses has that the officers of the people presumably did not have. Moses’ ministry is primarily God-ward, while the ministry of the elders is primarily people-ward.

Through this personal access, this ability to come before God and inquire of him directly, Moses could teach the people the instructions and will of God. This went beyond judging the people according to a natural integrity and good sense. In a word, Moses was a *prophet* as much as he was a judge. The officers of the people were not yet prophets or prophetic. They had not had the Spirit of God placed upon them. Though the elders do not continue to function as prophets in the technical sense, it is evident that they will receive a prophetic impartation by the end of our passage.

What we can understand from this is that church leaders can have all manner of leaders under them helping them to carry out the tasks of ministry, and yet still feel alone. In today’s church, we are often concerned with the mechanics of leadership and

organization rather than the spirit of such work. We constantly improve our systems, making them more efficient and far-reaching, and yet we still lead a people who murmur and complain. We still have dissatisfaction and conflict. Leaders, then, are not enough. Something more is required.

Analysis of Numbers 11:16-30

YHWH's solution to Moses' leadership crisis is to further equip people under Moses so they can more effectively share the burden. He has Moses gather seventy men who are elders of the people, men of known influence and proven leadership. This seems to be an important Biblical principle of leadership. Who should we be recruiting as leaders? People who already have influence. This principle also appears in Acts 6:3, where in order to deal with the administrative crisis of the distribution of food to the Grecian widows, the apostles instruct the people to select seven men "of good standing," men who were already people of influence in the community.

When the elders are gathered with Moses, YHWH says he will take some of the spirit that is on Moses and put it on the elders. Here we run into a couple of different possibilities for what the spirit is and the implications of those meanings. Tiffany and Ringe equate the spirit that God takes from Moses as equating to "Moses' power."⁴ Weisman would agree with this view to some degree in that he also does not view the spirit as being quite God's Spirit but Moses' "personal spirit."⁵

⁴ Frederick C Tiffany and Sharon H Ringe, *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 141.

⁵ Zeev Weisman, "The Personal Spirit as Imparting Authority," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 93, no. 2 (1981): 225.

For Tiffany and Ringe, the implication of the spirit being Moses' power is that it is a limited commodity, and as God distributes Moses' power to the elders, his own power is diminished. This understanding does figure well with Joshua's jealousy in verse 28. Joshua, in imploring Moses to stop Eldad and Medad from prophesying, is apparently concerned that Moses' standing will be diminished as the leader of the Israelites. Ashley notes that Joshua "sees the unauthorized actions of Eldad and Medad as a challenge to Moses' leadership."⁶ However, because verse 17 does not specify whose spirit God takes, we must look elsewhere in the text to help us come to any definitive conclusion.

Weisman's view that the spirit is Moses' own spirit is even more problematic than viewing it as Moses' power or authority. He asserts that only here and in 2 Ki 2:1-15, when Elisha asks to receive a double portion of Elijah's spirit, do we find the impartation of a personal spirit to another person. To clarify, Weisman does make a distinction between the spirit that is in a person and the personal spirit he refers to in Numbers 11 and 2 Ki 2. He writes that "the spirit ascribed to both these men is close to the transcendental spirit that appears in the bible as: 'the spirit of the Lord' or 'the spirit of God,' which, when it encounters certain people (chiefly in a sudden descent) causes them to act in their special functions as charismatic men."⁷ It is close, but it is not solely or exactly God's Spirit that is on these men. Weisman does not elaborate any further on what this spirit might exactly be. Is it substantive as the spirit of a man or the Spirit of

⁶ Timothy R Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 216.

⁷ Weisman, "The Personal Spirit as Imparting Authority," 226.

God might be? Or is it symbolic? Functionally for Weisman, the conferring of the spirit is a conferring of a kind of prophetic authority, while not being a prophetic office.⁸

In Gray's commentary on Numbers, he interprets Moses' spirit as being material and quantifiable.⁹ The implication of this is that the spirit that is on Moses is limited. This, then, could not be the spirit of God for Gray. It was a measurable substance that God could take, and it was large enough that it could be distributed to seventy elders. This idea of a quantity of spirit being given to people does have support in other Biblical texts. For example, Elisha asks for a "double share" (2 Ki 2:9) of Elijah's spirit. There are numerous texts that talk about people being "filled with the spirit" (e.g., Ex 31:3; Lk 1:15, 41, 67; Eph 5:18). However, this must be balanced with the claim that God "gives the Spirit without measure" (Jn 3:34). It is an interesting concept but difficult to understand with any mathematical certainty.

In my own reading of the spirit that was on Moses, I am not entirely convinced by the arguments for viewing it as Moses' own spirit. It seems that a greater consensus would attribute the spirit referred to here as being God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit. A good number of modern translations, such as the ESV, NIV, NASB and NLT all capitalize "Spirit" in verse 17, denoting that this is God's Spirit. Ashley notes that in most instances where a spirit is said to be "upon" a person in the Bible, it refers to God's Spirit.¹⁰

⁸ Weisman, "The Personal Spirit as Imparting Authority," 229.

⁹ George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers* (Edinburgh, UK: Clark, 1903), 110.

¹⁰ Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, 211.

I am also in agreement with Ashley's interpretation of verse 29, that Moses' own understanding of the "spirit" referred to was as the Spirit of God.¹¹ Moses seems to equate what YHWH did for the seventy elders with God putting his own Holy Spirit on them, not Moses' own spirit. It makes sense then to take this clear definition of what happened to the elders and read it back into verse 17, that God takes some of his own Spirit that was on Moses and distributes it to the seventy elders.

Taking these interpretive choices together, however, yields an intriguing picture of the dynamic of God putting his spirit on people. It is not easy to dismiss the personal, human aspect of what is happening. Why did God not simply give the elders some of his Holy Spirit directly? Why did he need to take some of the spirit that was on Moses? I believe thinking through these questions will be instructive for New Testament and modern concepts of Holy Spirit impartation or baptism of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands.

Moses' Prophetic-Eschatological Wish

In verse 29, Moses declares, "Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!" (Nu 11:29). The imperfect aspect of the verbs in this statement means that this has not been fulfilled. A general giving of the Spirit of God is not a reality during Moses' time, as much as he might desire it.

This fact can help clarify why God takes some of the spirit that is on Moses to give it to the elders. Because the time has not yet come for a general outpouring of God's spirit, it is only given in a limited way. It appears to be limited to special, chosen persons,

¹¹ Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, 211.

and limited in quantity. Moses, having been specially called by God directly, seems to have been given God's Spirit, even though we do not find any explicit mention in Scripture where such a transaction might have taken place. Perhaps the burning bush experience was where Moses' received the Spirit.

There does seem to be a correlation between the moment of call and some kind of empowering for prophets and prophetic figures in the OT. For instance, when David was first anointed by Samuel, it says, "the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward" (1 Sa 16:13). Also, Isaiah writes, "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed" (Is 61:1). We see that anointing for service is accompanied by the spirit being upon someone, and even further, that this anointing is for prophetic proclamation.

If the spirit comes upon only those who are specially called, then we can see why the elders received the spirit that was upon Moses. The elders were not called directly by God. They were being deputized to help Moses fulfill his call. Because this is the case, it seems appropriate that the proper protocol in this instance is to go through Moses for the giving of the spirit.

For Moses, this is not an ideal situation. He would prefer that not only the elders, but all the Israelites would experience the spirit of God the way he does. Then the Israelites would not receive God's revelation second-hand but experience God first-hand. Ultimately, this would mean Moses' role as mediator would no longer be necessary. People could know God personally. I call this desire of Moses a prophetic-eschatological wish, because it is confirmed in Joel 2, and ultimately fulfilled in the NT in Acts 2.

We read in Joel, “Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.” (Jl 2:28-29). Centuries later, in Ac 2:16, Peter claims that the fulfillment of the Joel prophecy was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

We have the benefit of the completed Scriptures to see that Moses’ almost offhand wish was prophetic in the sense that it was the will of God to make it a reality. It was confirmed by prophets in more explicit statements later. It was also eschatological in that it would be fulfilled in the “last days,” which Peter understands as the era inaugurated by Pentecost, an era it could be argued we still live in today.

What this means is that though Numbers 11 describes an event that happened millennia prior, it is still relevant to our understanding of the Spirit of God being put upon people today. There is a prophetic and Scriptural thread that links us to the seventy elders through Acts and Joel. As such, we do not need to read Numbers 11 as an irrelevant ancient relic, but as instructive for our present understanding of what God wants for his people.

For some, Numbers 11 is “both paradigmatic or normative for leaders of God’s people as well as programmatic for the people of God looking ahead to the New Testament age.”¹² I hesitate to agree here because it is difficult to make one particular experience in a narrative portion of Scripture normative for a general population. But if

¹² Roger D Cotton, “The Pentecostal Significance of Numbers 11,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10, no. 1 (October 2001): 10.

we can glean principles related to God's Spirit and his relation to people, that would be quite helpful. Numbers 11, then, is more *instructive* than *normative*.

Anomalous Impartation

A major reason why we cannot make this instance of God's Spirit coming upon persons normative or programmatic for present day Christians is the case of Eldad and Medad in our text. Here we have a situation where the Spirit of God is given to two elders who were not present with the rest of the seventy when God meets with them. Yet, they also received the Spirit. This elicits a sharp protest from Joshua, Moses' aide-de-camp. We see that the way this incident plays out is irregular, yet Moses does not share Joshua's offense in response. Moses rather welcomes the unexpected giving of God's Spirit. We learn through this of the fundamentally uncontrolled nature of God when he wants to put his Spirit on people.

There are some questions as to who exactly Eldad and Medad were and what they were doing apart from the other elders at the tent of meeting. The main one is whether they were part of the original seventy chosen by Moses to receive the spirit or were outside of that group. Were they supposed to be there but somehow failed to appear? Or were they not expected to be there, and somehow received the Spirit in an unauthorized way?

Dozeman clearly views Eldad and Medad as not being part of the seventy elders.¹³ He takes verse 24 as having the precise literal meaning that when Moses gathers the

¹³ Thomas B. Dozeman, "Numbers," in *The New Interpreter's Bible: One-Volume Commentary*, ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David Petersen (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), <http://www.ministrymatters.com/reader/9781426735509/#chapter11.xhtml>.

seventy elders, all of them are present. This is a strong development from his earlier view that left the issue more open-ended.¹⁴

Gray and Budd both share the view along with Dozeman that Eldad and Medad were not among the seventy. In addition to the precise description of seventy elders being present and seventy receiving the spirit in verse 24-25, Gray cites the description of Eldad and Medad as “registered” in verse 26 and the lack of such a description for the seventy as distinguishing the two outsiders from the seventy.¹⁵ Budd sees Gray’s view as more probable than the other position that Eldad and Medad were part of the seventy.¹⁶

In contrast, Ashley takes a less literal reading of verses 24-25. He understands the numbering of the seventy being present more loosely, allowing for two of the number to be absent. He also understands “registered” to mean that Eldad and Medad were registered as members of the seventy elders rather than a larger registry of elders and officers of Israel.¹⁷

Against what I view as Ashley’s more natural reading of the text that Eldad and Medad were supposed to be at the meeting as members of the seventy is the intriguing possibility of a divine scandal. If the two men were not part of the seventy, then not only were they prophesying in the wrong place, they were the wrong people. I would not hold this as uncharacteristic of God’s surprising exercise of his own sovereignty in favoring and anointing unexpected people.

¹⁴ Thomas B Dozeman, “The Book of Numbers: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume II.*, vol. II (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998), 107.

¹⁵ Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers*, 114.

¹⁶ Budd, *Numbers*, 5:128.

¹⁷ Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, 215.

This has staggering implications for ministry and for whom we designate as legitimate agents of God's Spirit. It is also a sobering reminder of God's sovereignty in giving his own Spirit, and the uncontrollable nature of the process. We would be foolish to develop too rigid a theology or practice surrounding the giving of the Holy Spirit to people today. If we do, we may find ourselves with the restrictive impulse of Joshua, who preferred that the Spirit be contained to those whom he viewed as authorized or worthy. In so doing so, we would be at odds with the prophetic-eschatological wish of Moses, and as we understand from Joel and Acts, of God himself.

Barnette gives voice to the present-day ramifications of this uncontrollable, anomalous giving of the Spirit:

The irony is that when the church restricts the prophetic power of the "nonprofessional" minister, she is losing out on her best asset. As their job descriptions grow longer, professional ministers are ever more in need of turning to their lay ministers in order to ease the load which they carry. For the local church to do ministry in these times, she must loosen the reigns of order so that the spirit of prophecy might run more freely. Such is the spirit behind the account of "unauthorized prophecy" by Eldad and Medad in the eleventh chapter of Numbers.¹⁸

The fear of losing control should not prevent us from living into the fulfillment of Moses' prophetic wish, that all God's people would be prophets, and that God would put his Spirit on them.

Prophetic Manifestation

There is one final consideration that I find relevant in this text, and that is what happens when the Spirit of God comes upon the elders. The text says, "When the spirit

¹⁸ James R. Barnette, "Numbers 11:14-17, 24-30--Unauthorized Prophecy: 'Would That All the Lord's People!'," *Review & Expositor* 90 (1993): 553.

rested upon them, they prophesied” (Nu 11:25). Most commentators note that the verb translated “prophesied” is in the Hithpael aspect. Ashley notes that this gives a meaning closer to something like, “act the prophet.”¹⁹ Rather than focusing on prophecy as speaking the word of God, the Hithpael aspect focuses on some other outward, observable behavior associated with prophets.

Weisman points out that what is likely a sort of ecstatic behavior does not mean that the elders are now prophets. Such an outward manifestation “is meant to consecrate them for their intended function alongside Moses and to serve as a sign of their confirmation.”²⁰ This is confirmed by verse 25 that comments that the elders did not continue to prophesy after that initial ecstatic experience. They were not called to be prophets, as Moses was. Their continued leadership as elders, however, would be different than what it was to this point. It would have something of the prophetic power that Moses carried upon it.

This connection with the prophetic can be applied more generally when thinking about the Spirit of God coming upon people, even for today. Moses clearly associates the prophetic with the receiving of the Holy Spirit. He says as much when he wishes that all God’s people would be prophets, and that God would put his Spirit on them. Not that they would be prophets in the sense of an official office or function, but that they would be prophets as the elders became prophets, that their role and ability would be touched with the prophetic, therefore enhancing their effectiveness in truly representing God to the people, even in their practical leadership. This reality is reflected in Paul’s instruction

¹⁹ Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, 213.

²⁰ Weisman, “The Personal Spirit as Imparting Authority,” 230.

to the Corinthian church when he writes, “Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy” (1 Co 14:1).

I believe this is an important principle that can inform our expectations today of what happens when the Spirit of God comes upon a person. It is fair to expect an observable, tangible indication that such a transference has happened. The result of such an experience should be that the person becomes a prophet in the broadest sense, that they have a prophetic empowering to do whatever it is they are called to do with a connection to the divine, able to act as a true agent and representative of God.

Conclusion to Numbers 11

This instance of God putting his Spirit on the seventy elders is an important precedence for the people of God who desire to understand the dynamic of the Holy Spirit coming upon us. First, the Spirit of God empowers those who are called and chosen to do special work for God. Such a person has a personal connection with the Spirit, and through such a person, the Spirit is able to not only operate, but be transferred to others, imparting the authority and power from one person to another.

In the eschaton which is inaugurated by Pentecost in Acts 2, this empowering is made more generally available to those who are connected to Jesus. This broadening of the Spirit’s availability fulfills the prophetic-eschatological wish of Moses, confirmed by Joel, announced as a present reality by Peter when he instructs, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Ac 2:38). This prophetic effect of the Spirit coming upon a person may be expected to be accompanied by tangible, observable

manifestation. The result is a prophetic characteristic and empowering that defines that person's functioning for God.

Finally, this phenomenon of God empowering people with his Holy Spirit is sovereignly God's to control and initiate. He may follow protocol for the most part, but we must allow for God to break from it as well. We may experience anomalous situations where the Spirit of God comes upon people in seemingly disorderly fashion. The Spirit may even be given to people that we would not expect, people whom we think are the wrong kind of people. It would be dangerous for us to restrict or oppose the free and unexpected ways God moves upon people. To try to conform the experience of the Holy Spirit to too narrow a protocol could bring us into opposition with the very heart of God, which is that all people would receive his Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:4-25

Initial Thoughts

My ultimate concern for this project is to create an instrument to facilitate the Baptism of the Holy Spirit or an impartation of the Holy Spirit as part of the programmatic life of the local church. This topic is too vaguely understood in many churches. It is my conviction that the Holy Spirit is the life-breath of the church, and without him, the church is powerless.

While I believe strongly that the Holy Spirit is at work in the church of Jesus Christ, I am somewhat perturbed that there is so little concrete understanding of the Holy Spirit in most local churches, especially of the mainline traditions, of which my own

United Methodist Church is one. How do we experience the Holy Spirit with as much certainty and definiteness as the early church did? Is this even possible anymore? If it is possible, what are the mechanics of facilitating such an experience reliably in the programs of the church?

In order to help fill in some of these knowledge gaps, I will examine the experience of the Samaritans who received the gospel of Jesus from Philip. This is an intriguing story in that it has some irregularities when compared to other stories of evangelism and conversion in Acts. It is a text that deals with questions of initial belief and its relationship to the receiving of the Holy Spirit, as well as the channels through whom the Holy Spirit is given.

In this study of Acts 8:4-25, my main concern is to understand what the relationship is between conversion and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. What can the Samaritan conversion narrative teach us about how to program conversion and receiving of the Holy Spirit in the local church? I hope to find some answers to these questions, or at least gain a better understanding of what we can and cannot know, through a study of this passage.

Conversion and the Receiving of the Holy Spirit

The distinguishing feature of the story of Philip evangelizing in Samaria is an unexpected long delay between the Samaritans' stated conversion (belief and baptism, v. 12) and their reception of the Holy Spirit (v. 17). In between these two events, word had to be sent to the Jerusalem church. That church then had to commiserate about the situation and come to a decision to send Peter and John as representatives. All this

required travel time both ways. When Peter and John reached the believers in Samaria, they needed to be brought up to speed on the situation in person. Then discerning the need, they prayed that the Samaritans would receive the Holy Spirit, and then they laid hands on them. It is only here that we are told the Samaritans finally received the Holy Spirit. Previously, in verse 16, Luke makes it clear that “as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

This narrative is helpful in understanding the phenomenon of conversion with the reception of the Holy Spirit not because it is normative, but because it is unusual. To break up the phenomenon into component parts, if indeed they are both parts of a whole, may help us understand the specific dynamics at work. To be sure, it is not a given that these two parts together make up something holistic. They may very well be two interrelated but separate works.

Differing approaches to the Samaritan dilemma

The argument surrounding the relationship between belief/baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit in Acts 8 has a variety of viewpoints. All of them try to explain the delay between conversion and the reception of the Holy Spirit in this passage. Turner has perhaps the best summary of the different viewpoints that are most prominent. He identifies the following six explanations.²¹

²¹ Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 361–73. Turner has an extremely full and fair treatment of the different arguments and their major proponents in this section of his book. I am just providing the barest gloss of the arguments.

(a) Luke is borrowing from two different sources which accounts for the separate treatments of conversion and reception of the Holy Spirit. This treatment does not appear to have robust support.

(b) The Samaritans were not truly converted. This is the contention of Dunn,²² who is perhaps the most catalytic figure in this debate. His argument is ingenious and nuanced and cannot be easily summarized here. We will discuss Dunn more thoroughly later.

(c) The Samaritans were converted and received the Holy Spirit at baptism, though this is not mentioned. This is inferred from NT theology about conversion and the Holy Spirit. What the Samaritans later received at the hands of the apostles, then, was a charismatic impartation of spiritual gifting and empowerment.

(d) There is a more obscure argument that sees Luke preserving two different conversion traditions in this passage. The difference is one speaks of baptism “in” the name of Jesus and the other baptism “into” the name of Jesus. The first comes with the Spirit, the second does not. It is questionable whether such a distinction is even linguistically valid.

(e) Turner critiques Spencer’s²³ narrative explanation that wants to parallel Philip and Peter with John the Baptist and Jesus as an explanation for Philip not conferring the Holy Spirit in the same way John the Baptist does not confer the Spirit.

²² James D. G Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London, UK: SCM Press, 2010).

²³ F. Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 211–41.

(f) The final viewpoint Turner describes is that the gift of the Spirit is not necessarily given at baptism, but is a gift meant to empower mission. This is the view of Menzies. He sees the conversion of the Samaritans as truly happening upon their belief and baptism. He consequently sees the later receiving of the Holy Spirit as incorporating the Samaritans “not into the church, but into the missionary enterprise of the church.”²⁴

Unmentioned in Turner’s above overview is a viewpoint related to the sixth. This view is that the Samaritans did truly convert when they believed and were baptized. However, they did not receive the Spirit because God wanted them to be connected to the Jerusalem church. Longenecker encapsulates this theory eloquently. He notes the historical enmity between the Samaritans and the Jews. So, to force a connection between Samaritan and Jewish Christians, “God in his providence withheld the gift of the Holy Spirit till Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritans.”²⁵

One can see from the variety of approaches to the dilemma of the delayed giving of the Spirit that the issue does not necessarily warrant a neat answer. It also teaches us to be cautious about being overly dogmatic or inflexible in our own views on the matter. And at the very least it should make us pause before formulating any kind of rigid doctrine about the Holy Spirit and conversion from this passage.

Sifting through the various positions, however, two conclusions become apparent. One is that Luke’s own understanding is that the Samaritans did experience a genuine conversion when they believed and were baptized. The other is that it is truer to Luke’s

²⁴ Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, T & T Clark Academic Paperbacks (London, UK: T & T Clark International, 2004), 212.

²⁵ Richard N Longenecker et al., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: John - Acts : With the New International Version of the Holy Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1981), 359.

own understanding that the Samaritans did not have the Holy Spirit until they received him at the hands of the apostles Peter and John.

True conversion without the reception of the Holy Spirit

To elaborate, I argue the following points: (a) Luke does not indicate any deficiency in the Samaritans belief or baptism, or in Philip's preaching; (b) Dunn's arguments against a legitimate Samaritan conversion in verse 12 are, though clever, ultimately unconvincing; and, most controversially, (c) Menzies' argument that the reception of the Spirit is not necessary for conversion presents a potential solution that merits further inquiry.

(a) True Samaritan conversion

The most natural reading of the passage sees Luke recounting Philip's evangelistic mission quite positively. In terms of Philip's preaching, we have several statements that emphasize his orthodoxy. He "proclaimed the Messiah to them" (v. 5). He "was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (v. 12). His proclamation was accompanied by signs (v. 6). All these statements let the reader know that contrary to being deficient, Philip's preaching was quite thorough and rich.

What about the reception of the Samaritans? Was there any indication that their belief was deficient? Luke writes, "The crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip" (v. 6). Not only did the Samaritans listen to Philip, they all listened, and that eagerly. They saw the signs that he did and responded with joy (vv. 7-8). In this,

as Parsons points out, the Samaritans show themselves to be far more receptive to the gospel than even the Jews,²⁶ to whom it came first. Finally, it says “they believed Philip” (v. 12), and submitted to the appropriate rite associated with belief, which was baptism. Both men and women were baptized. There is no indication of any deficiency in any of these steps.

Finally, we see the response of Peter and John that seems to confirm the legitimacy of the Samaritan’s conversion. Marshall notes that “Peter and John didn’t preach to them, but rather prayed for the Spirit to be given to them.”²⁷ So if there was any deficiency, it was not in the Samaritan’s belief or understanding. Nor was it in the manner of their baptism. It was the fact that the Spirit “had not come upon any of them” (v. 16). The Samaritans were genuine Christians at their belief and baptism.

(b) Responses to Dunn’s arguments against a true Samaritan conversion

Dunn uses a variety of approaches to discredit the Samaritans’ conversion. Ultimately, while those approaches are interesting, I do not find them to be supported by the text. I will briefly respond to some of them here.

Dunn brings in the Samaritan expectation of a *Taheb* or Messiah as causing them to misunderstand Philip. The *Taheb*, they believed, would come and restore the Samaritans and the Israelites to a second kingdom. The Samaritans especially would be exalted. The Samaritans’ faith, then, was not in the Jesus of the Gospels but a political

²⁶ Mikeal C Parsons, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 113.

²⁷ I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1980), 158.

figure that would establish an earthly kingdom,²⁸ something that Jesus rejected (Jn 18:36).

The above point infers something from the historical background that is not in the text. While it is impossible to gauge Luke's familiarity with this Samaritan expectation, the overwhelmingly positive portrayal of the Samaritans' faith does not seem to even hint at a worldly or politically motivated faith. Wouldn't Philip have exposed and addressed this kind of a misunderstanding, and even more probably Peter and John, when they assessed the situation? The historical observation may be valid, but it is impossible to conclusively say that it is relevant in this instance.

Dunn then points out that the Samaritans were a "superstitious people."²⁹ He refers to their adulation of Simon Magus in Acts 8:9-11. Just as they were easily duped by Simon's display of power, they were also readily susceptible to follow Philip, who displayed an even greater power. Dunn surmises that their faith, then, was simply a fascination with miracles and signs.

Again, this is not anywhere stated in the text and must be inferred from circumstantial details. Their belief in Simon Magus does not bind them always to superstitious belief. To the degree that the object of one's belief is valid, one's belief itself can be validated, regardless of the particulars. Turner agrees that "Luke is far from deprecating a faith that is confirmed and undergirded by signs."³⁰ In Acts 9:35 we see another instance of a community being converted through a healing, and this is not seen

²⁸ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 63–64.

²⁹ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 63–64..

³⁰ Turner, *Power from on High*, 364.

as a deficient faith. Jesus himself instructs, “even though you do not believe me, believe the works” (Jn 10:38). In fact, in most instances where people convert in Acts, they are helped in their belief by signs and wonders. Are the Samaritans that much more superstitious than the other people of that time who believed through signs? I am not convinced of this.

Dunn then argues that ἐπίστευσαν τῷ Φιλίππῳ (v. 12), where ἐπίστευσαν refers to a dative object, “signifies intellectual assent to a statement or proposition, rather than commitment to God.”³¹ However, Peterson finds that Luke uses the same construction in two other places in Acts, in 16:34 and 18:8, and in both those instances, the faith is portrayed as genuine.³² It is clear that you cannot argue linguistically that the Samaritan’s faith was merely intellectual, and neither does the context encourage us to come to this interpretation.

The next argument looks at Simon Magus’ conversion. If his conversion is found to be spurious, then the Samaritans’ may be as well by association. I do not agree with this line of reasoning. Even if Simon’s faith is found to be false, I do not read the text as condemning the rest of the Samaritans along with Simon. Simon’s fate is his own.

However, the interpretive balance in my view falls to the side of seeing Simon as a Christian. Fabien sees a marked change in how Simon is described before and after

³¹ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 65.

³² David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2009), 284.

verse 13. Before, he is described as separate and even above the community of Samaritans. After baptism, he is described more as a fellow member of the community.³³

Dunn interprets verse 21, “You have no part or share in this,” as referring to having no part or share in the people of God.³⁴ However, I believe a better reading would be that Peter is referring to the ministry of laying on of hands so that people can receive the Holy Spirit. This is, after all, what Simon is asking to receive. Simon’s status as a believer is not what Peter is addressing.

In fact, the NT in general is not preoccupied with establishing the legitimacy of people’s conversions. There are certainly instances, such as with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), where someone who is in the community of faith turns out to be sinful. But the NT is not concerned with doing a post-mortem examination of the veracity of anyone’s belief or baptism. People can fall from a right standing before God, even Christians.

Admittedly, Simon does exhibit an exceedingly corrupted understanding. He continues to be obsessed with power, and “Simon’s magical worldview had not changed, and a more thorough renunciation of his former beliefs and practices was still necessary.”³⁵ Peter does describe Simon as bitter and bound in verse 23. Simon, even if a Christian, has a good deal to work on to be considered living out the faith satisfactorily!

But just because Simon has a sinful heart does not mean that his conversion was not genuine. Christians can fall into sin. The fact that Peter holds out the possibility for Simon to repent and be forgiven shows that Peter’s curse in verse 20 expressed in the

³³ Patrick Fabien, “La Conversion de Simon Le Magicien (Ac 8,4-25),” *Biblica* 91, no. 2 (2010): 226.

³⁴ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 65.

³⁵ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 284.

optative mood serves as a warning designed to inspire repentance. It shows Simon the destruction that is possible, though not determined.

Dunn's final argument against a true Samaritan initial conversion is in the historical animosity between Samaritans and Jews. He suspects that the Samaritans could not give fully into their belief because of a wariness about how they would be received by the Jews. It is only after Peter and John reaffirm their faith that they can fully believe, and this is when they receive the Holy Spirit. Again, nothing in our passage would indicate this to be a factor from the perspective of the Samaritans. It is purely speculation based on historical circumstances.

A natural and unbiased reading of Acts 8 yields the strong likelihood that Luke viewed the Samaritans as genuinely converted at the moment of their belief and baptism. All arguments to the contrary rely on extra-textual circumstances and theologies. One might always hold out the possibility that those arguments may have some merit, but Luke is too clear a historian to allow much room for those factors to hold sway.

(c) The Samaritans did not receive the Spirit until Peter and John laid hands on them

A common feature of evangelical soteriology is the assumption that every Christian receives the Spirit at the very moment of conversion. Many believe that it is essential for a person have the Holy Spirit in order to be considered a Christian. Dunn beautifully expresses this in the most strident terms when he writes, ““It is not sufficiently realized that in NT times the possession of the Spirit was *the* hallmark of the Christian.”³⁶

³⁶ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 66.

I would absolutely agree that every Christian must receive the Holy Spirit to experience the fullness of God's will for them. A person without the Spirit, especially if they claim to be a Christian, is deficient in their experience. However, for Luke, it seems that receiving the Holy Spirit is a step in the *ordo salutis* that is subsequent to repentance and faith in Christ, not simultaneous with it as many evangelicals believe. It might be consistent in Luke's historical theology to say that the Samaritans were indeed converted when they believed and were baptized into Jesus Christ, but they did not receive the Holy Spirit at that time, at least not in the way Luke is concerned with. This understanding of Luke will need to be balanced with Pauline pneumatology as it concerns indwelling versus Spirit baptism. Still it is an intriguing exercise to go along with Luke for a moment and see if his view can be consistent with Paul.

Let us examine three texts that are particularly supportive of the Evangelical position that the Holy Spirit is given at the moment of conversion. We will look at Rom 8:9, 1 Cor 12:3, and Eph 1:13. I will show in each how we are preconditioned by Pauline theology to understand these verses as describing simultaneous belief and reception of the Holy Spirit, but that this conclusion is not obligatory otherwise.

“But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him” (Rom 8:9). This is clear and straightforward. Paul does not know of a proper Christian who can be without the Holy Spirit. For Paul, having the Spirit seems to be the primary indicator of a person being a Christian. However, this verse may not be concerned with an order of salvation theology with respect to whether the Holy Spirit is given at the moment of belief in Christ. It simply says that having the Holy Spirit is the normal, expected

condition of a true Christian. Could there be a moment, however brief or long, when someone converts in faith but has not been given the Spirit?

The second verse to examine is the following: “Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12:3). This may seem to prove that no one can confess Christ as Lord if they do not have the Holy Spirit. While a Pauline theology states that the Holy Spirit enables a person to come to faith in Christ, this verse does not conclusively state that the Holy Spirit indwells a person at the moment of faith. It is an assumption that the Holy Spirit must indwell a person to enable them to confess Christ. This is not mandated by the text. This verse does not make mention of the Spirit indwelling a person, only that a person confesses Christ *by* the Holy Spirit. It may be possible that the Holy Spirit can engender the faith of a person without indwelling them. This is the argument of David Pawson, that the Spirit is with a person, not in them unless they experience a visible baptism of the Holy Spirit.³⁷

Finally, “In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit” (Eph 1:13). Here we see clear evidence of a process of salvation that involves a sequential order of steps. First comes hearing the word of truth, then comes belief, and only once someone “had believed in him,” are they marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit. The giving of the Holy Spirit is the seal, the endorsement of God, ratifying a transaction that has already been made in the stage of faith in Christ. First you believe in

³⁷ Max Turner, “Interpreting the Samaritans of Acts 8: The Waterloo of Pentecostal Soteriology and Pneumatology?,” *Pneuma* 23, no. 2 (September 2001): 285.

Jesus, then you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which seals your faith and salvation.

No one receives the Holy Spirit before they believe.

Menzies makes this point when he writes, “for Luke the gift of the Spirit does not constitute a Christian.”³⁸ He views the giving of the Holy Spirit as supplementary to salvation for the purpose of mission and witness. This view of Luke’s understanding of the Spirit in relation to conversion, while seemingly unorthodox to an evangelical, is supported in the TDNT where we read, “Salvation, too, is never ascribed to the Spirit. According to Ac. 2:38 the Spirit is imparted to those who are already converted and baptised.”³⁹ Is Luke at odds with Paul in this understanding? I do not believe so. Paul was writing as a practical theologian. Luke was writing as a theological historian. They are describing salvation and the Spirit in different manners for different purposes.

For Luke, Acts is a narrative history with a theological purpose. This means he is recording history in order to support Christian belief. In Luke, however, we find that his theological approach does not edit out difficulties or seeming inconsistencies. He still prefers to present events as they happened rather than change them for the sake of theological neatness. Padilla sees Acts as “Hellenistic historical monograph in the Jewish Tradition.”⁴⁰ It takes a Greek form of historical monograph but applies a Jewish theological concern. I believe this makes Luke a doubly reliable Christian historian. He is

³⁸ Robert P Menzies, “The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology: With Special Reference to Luke-Acts” (University of Aberdeen, 1989), 252.

³⁹ Eduard Schweizer, “Πνεῦμα,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, G. W Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 412.

⁴⁰ Osvaldo Padilla, *Acts of the Apostles: Interpretation, History, and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 62.

presenting history that he has experienced or acquired as someone close to the sources and events, but with theological insight.

The value of this is that Luke gives us a glimpse into salvation case studies. This is different from Paul, who is neatly wrapping up understandings of salvation for practical theological application. In Luke, we are privileged to witness the variety of ways in which God saves a person. We see idiosyncrasies. We see inconsistencies. We see God establishing a protocol of salvation, but then, as in Acts 8, perfectly willing to break with protocol when a higher purpose necessitates it.

Now, in a normal salvation experience, I believe this sequence of salvation: the repentance/faith, baptism and receiving of the Holy Spirit; should happen one right after another so that for all intents and purposes, they seem simultaneous. And this gives us the right perspective in understanding the delay of the Holy Spirit in Acts 8:4-25. It is an *abnormal* experience of the process of salvation. It is not prescribed that there should be a delay as a matter of course, and we should not make any doctrine based on a view of this passage that normalizes such a partitioned experience of the salvation process.

While I agree with Menzies that “Luke simply did not feel that the text as it stands posed a problem,”⁴¹ I must disagree when he claims, “there is little reason to assume that this instance represents a unique exception, either historically or for Luke.”⁴² It is absolutely unusual in the explicit portrayal of belief and baptism into Jesus Christ followed days later by the reception of the Holy Spirit.

⁴¹ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 205.

⁴² Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 206.

Again, unlike Menzies, I find convincing the explanation for the delay as having to do with a desire on the part of God to connect the Samaritan Christians with the Jerusalem Church. I do see a correlation with the later story of Peter being sent to Cornelius (Acts 10). In fact, these two accounts portray the progression of the gospel witness to the two people groups that Jews historically were at enmity with, the Samaritans and the Romans. It is a beautiful picture of a sovereign God who desires that none would perish (2 Pt 3:9). I find it remarkable that God not only gives his Holy Spirit to encourage his own children, but to empower them to reach others, even the most “other,” and that he is willing to break his own rules and upend his own process to ensure that those who believe in Jesus will become connected and unified. “God’s salvation can really reach all the ends of the earth.”⁴³

So, I believe the situation of the Samaritans is akin to the disciples prior to Pentecost. The apostles were believers in Christ and were saved through faith, but they had not experienced the Holy Spirit in full measure yet and would not until Pentecost. Jesus describes their relationship with the Holy Spirit this way, “You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you” (Jn 14:17). At the moment of faith, then, could it be that the Holy Spirit abides *with us*, but not *in us*? While looking at Biblical context makes this terminology imprecise, this is an intriguing distinction for us to wrestle with. At the moment of faith, the Holy Spirit abides, or remains, with us. However, if we understand that Jesus is describing two distinct experiences of the Holy Spirit, this challenges us against settling for a sub-normal experience of the Christian faith where we

⁴³ Alexandre Vieira, “Holy Spirit, Church, and the Outsiders: A Brief Study of the Relation between Baptism and Holy Spirit in Acts 8:14-17,” *Missio Apostolica* 22, no. 1 (May 2014): 116.

are content for the Holy Spirit to be with us, believing there is nothing more to expect. Knowing that the Spirit not only wants to abide with us but in us in a more complete way should prompt us to seek for more, to seek a reception of the Holy Spirit that empowers us for witness.

Observable Experience

This leads me to the final matter related to this passage. It is evident here that receiving the Holy Spirit is an event that others can observe. It is not an internal, psychological phenomenon, nor is it something that we simply assume we have experienced because doctrine tells us we must have received the Holy Spirit if we believed in Jesus Christ. In this, I agree wholeheartedly with Dunn's observation that "Luke knows of no silent comings of the Spirit!"⁴⁴ Barrett also observes, "The gift of the Spirit, as understood here, was not a purely inward spiritual experience but a perceptible phenomenon."⁴⁵ How else could Luke claim that "Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands" (Acts 8:18)?

There is no explicit description of what kind of manifestation was observable when the Spirit came upon the Samaritans. All we know is that "come upon" (Acts 8:16) has a sense of "violence."⁴⁶ It may have been prophecy and/or tongues as in Acts 2 and Acts 10. In whatever way God chooses to manifest his Spirit, it has the purpose of

⁴⁴ James D. G Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 111.

⁴⁵ C. K Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 413.

⁴⁶ Turner, *Power from on High*, 369.

communicating and translating his reality and glory to other people. The Spirit empowers those he falls upon for witness.

Too many Christians today are in a Samaritan state of conversion, having believed and been baptized but having no experience of receiving the Holy Spirit. When we normalize this state and make a visible receiving of the Holy Spirit an inaccessibly unusual experience, this produces a complacency where people do not ask for the Spirit, and it also produces confusion as they wonder why, if they have believed in Christ, they have no power to be effective witnesses of Christ to the nations. They have the joy of salvation, but no fruit of evangelism. Our churches become filled with Evangelical Christians who complain with Bottomly, “Why is my Christian experience so devoid of supernatural reality? Why this raging disjunction between the faith I profess and the faith I practice?”⁴⁷ We need the Pentecostal experience of receiving the Holy Spirit in tangible, observable ways in every church, in every Christian, to see the fullness of our effective witness to the nations.

Summary

If there is a unifying theme that ties both passages together it is that God can give his Holy Spirit in surprising, even anomalous ways. The heart behind such break with protocol seems to be God’s desire to broaden the scope of his Holy Spirit’s reach. He desires to reach people religious insiders might not imagine reaching. God works to reach

⁴⁷ Kirk Bottomly, “Coming Out of the Hangar: Confessions of an Evangelical Deist,” in *The Kingdom and the Power: Are Healing and the Spiritual Gifts Used by Jesus and the Early Church Meant for the Church Today?: A Biblical Look at How to Bring the Gospel to the World with Power*, ed. J. I. Packer, Gary S. Greig, and Kevin. Springer (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993), 258.

people in ways that may even offend those who are concerned more about propriety than mission.

In my further research, it seems wise to be open to the unexpected and anomalous. Making the parameters of what is possible too rigid may necessitate that God break those guidelines in the way he moves. When programming a tool in the local church that would facilitate the receiving of the Holy Spirit by more people, it will be important to prioritize people receiving the Spirit over making sure we are doing things according to protocol.

I think of the sometimes rigid and laborious steps we make people go through before they can be considered an insider of the church. Or the latent mistrust that leaders often exhibit by not sharing their power and authority or opportunities for leadership with those who are younger or different. It is a damaging trend in many churches that we are so unwilling to relinquish control over the processes of the church to the Holy Spirit. It may be why we are failing in most denominations to expand our influence and raise up new leaders of the next generation.

We should be open to unexpected people. The story of Eldad and Medad shows us that even those we might not consider good candidates for the Spirit may nevertheless receive the Spirit as well as anyone else. An openness to people is at the same time an openness to God and his charismatic impulse. This can help us reserve judgment when we note people who seem to be following the Spirit in ways that appear to us to be chaotic. This is difficult I think for most of us who are in the mainline churches. I can think of many gifted potential leaders in my own church experience who were coldly edged out because they did not conform to staid and traditional perspectives and practices in the church. Many of them now operate outside of formal church structures, on the

mission field, in the coffee-houses, in the business environments where they are free to respond to the impulses of the Holy Spirit within them.

Not only does God want to give his Holy Spirit to more people, the main purpose for giving the Holy Spirit, besides as a seal of salvation for the person who has him, is effective witness and mission in the name of Jesus to unreached people. I have come to agree here with Menzies that the Spirit is not given to save the person, but the saved person is given the Spirit to save others. The focus is outward.

This is confirmed by the regularity with which Biblical accounts of the Spirit coming upon a person describe some kind of prophetic manifestation, an outward and observable phenomenon, whether it be prophecy or tongues, or something not described. Whatever it was, it was obvious to those witnessing the event that a person had received the Holy Spirit. This is woefully under-emphasized in today's mainline and Evangelical churches.

We have become too fearful and distrustful of outward manifestations. Granted, this is because some of these manifestations could be false, either based on emotionalism or psychological suggestion or even demonic influence. However, to completely do away with the idea that the Spirit should come upon a person in observable ways is to cheat the church of a very great assurance and indicator by which we can confidently partner with the Holy Spirit. Salvation is indeed by faith, and faith in Christ is empowered by the Holy Spirit. But Luke reminds us that there is more to the salvation process than faith in Jesus Christ. There is also the tangible experience of the Holy Spirit that supernaturally empowers us to be Christ's witnesses to the world.

The difficulty will be in systematizing Holy Spirit experience and implementing it in the local church in a way that gives freedom to God to sovereignly move in his own way and time. Unlike Simon Magus, we cannot have magical thinking when it comes to administering the Holy Spirit to the converted. It is not a matter of incanting a formula of words or going through a set rite. God can move in and out of rites and formulas. At the same time, we must listen to the direction of the Holy Spirit and learn from the accounts of the Spirit's empowering people in Scripture to guide our pursuit. As long as we do not make any particular experience too strictly normative, we can avoid making Holy Spirit experience a source of contention, hurt and disunity, and allow it to be the unifying, empowering experience it was meant to be.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

John Wesley is considered by some to be the father of Pentecostalism.¹ His views on a second blessing experience of sanctification following conversion formed the basis of the later Holiness Movement's understanding of an instantaneous work of sanctification, which in turn paved the way for the Pentecostal understanding of the second experience as a baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of *glossolalia*.

As such, Wesley is influential in modern understandings of the Holy Spirit and spiritual manifestations. I believe an examination of early Methodist understandings and experiences of the Holy Spirit will be helpful to us today, particularly to those of us in churches that do not have a Pentecostal background. By looking at the earlier experiences, we can better understand later moves of the Spirit and be better equipped to seek out fresh expressions of the Holy Spirit for our time.

In studying John Wesley and the Methodist revival, I will be looking at some of the explicitly supernatural elements in their spiritual experiences. This will undergird our understanding of early Methodist spirituality as experiential and supernatural. Then I will examine Christian Perfection or entire sanctification along with assurance of salvation as

¹ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1971), 13.

the most sought-after Christian experience. This perspective is developed in John Wesley's theology and given nuance through his interaction with both opponents and his own associates. I will finally look to the sacramental nature of Methodist spiritual experience as facilitated by their means of grace and how these serve as a vehicle for genuine spiritual encounters with God through the Holy Spirit.

It is my hope that in studying the early Methodist movement, modern day Methodists and other mainline protestants as well as charismatic and Pentecostal Christians can rediscover one of the sources of present-day understandings Holy Spirit experience. I believe there are things that have been lost that we need to reclaim, particularly for Methodists. There is also wisdom in the Wesleyan revival that can serve as a corrective or alternative approach to Holy Spirit experience that may be quite relevant for reaching twenty-first century unchurched people with the reality of God.

Rediscovering Holy Spirit Experience in Methodism

The supernatural elements of the Wesleyan revival have largely been ignored in the major historical discussions within Methodism. Billman, referring to the supernatural elements in Methodist history, laments the absence of any representation of these occurrences in the academic training of United Methodist clergy.² It has also been my own experience in the standard courses on United Methodist History based on the most widely used texts that the supernatural elements are almost completely ignored.

² Frank Billman, *The Supernatural Thread in Methodism: Signs and Wonders Among Methodists Then and Now* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2013), xi.

Charles Wesley's Supernatural Conversion

For example, the account of Charles Wesley's conversion to an assurance of salvation by faith is explicitly providential and prophetic, even by Charles Wesley's own analysis. However, the treatment of this same account in Heitzenrater's standard historical survey of the Methodist movement leaves out all of the astoundingly prophetic elements, noting only that Charles Wesley, "in the midst of continuing spiritual struggles and while sick in bed on Whitsunday, felt 'a strange palpitation of heart,' was able to say, 'I believe, I believe!' and found himself at peace with God."³ This is a natural and inoffensive retelling of the incident from a rationalistic point of view. However, the most interesting bits of the narrative concerning Mrs. Musgrave are missing.

On May 21st, 1738, the day of his full conversion, Charles Wesley was gravely ill and bedridden. He had been desperately wrestling with his own lack of faith but growing in the understanding that salvation is by faith alone. During this period he was "seeking Christ as in an agony."⁴ As he was partly asleep in his sickbed, he heard a Mrs. Musgrave come in and say, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities."⁵ It was on reflecting on these words and whether they were the words of Christ himself that Charles felt the "strange palpitation of heart" and finally confessed his faith in Jesus Christ.

³ Richard P Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013). With quotations from Charles Wesley, S. T Kimbrough, and Kenneth G. C Newport, *The Manuscript Journal of the Reverend Charles Wesley, M.A.* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 2008), 106–8.

⁴ Charles Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, vol. 1 (London, UK: John Mason, 1849), 85.

⁵ Charles Wesley, *Journal*, 1:90.

This is an amazing testimony of a genuine spiritual encounter, but Mrs. Musgrave's account of this event is also quite supernatural. It was indeed she who had come into the room to speak those words of healing over Charles, but she confessed, "It was I, a weak, sinful creature, spoke; but the words were Christ's: he commanded me to say them, and so constrained me that I could not forbear."⁶ She then proceeded to explain that Jesus Christ had appeared to her in a dream and commanded her to speak those words to Charles Wesley, something she was extremely reluctant to do, but also unable to resist. In Charles Wesley's conversion, then, we see elements of supernatural healing, a vision of Jesus Christ, and prophetic utterance all working together to bring about true and converting faith in Charles' spirit. And yet, present-day Methodists would likely be quite shocked to learn that these sorts of things were taking place in the early days of the movement.

New Year's at Fetter Lane and Other Events

Later that year at a New Year's Watch Service at the Fetter Lane society, the headquarters of a growing revival of Moravians and Methodists, those present experienced the Holy Spirit. John Wesley writes,

Mon. Jan. 1, 1739.—Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles, were present at our love-feast in Fetter-Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of his Majesty, we broke out with one voice, "We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord."⁷

⁶ Charles Wesley, *Journal*, 1:91.

⁷ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, Third Edition, vol. 1 (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 170.

In present-day Pentecostal or Charismatic language, we might call this being “slain in the spirit” or “falling under the power.” Their crying out and declaring the praises of God are not unlike the prophetic manifestations in the book of Acts, “in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power” (Acts 2:11 NRSV).

Clark notes that “Wesley...witnessed demonic deliverance in his meetings, as well as people being thrown to the ground—later called ‘swooning,’ and later still, ‘slain in the Spirit.’”⁸ Hyatt relates how “In one meeting at Newgate, for example, as he began to preach, “immediately one, and another, and another sunk to the earth. They dropped on every side as if thunderstruck.”⁹ This was a frequent way Wesley’s hearers experienced the power of the Holy Spirit.

Much of what we know about these types of occurrences are from Wesley’s own journals. Billman does an excellent job of curating and highlighting some of these instances. Three notable entries have to do with those who were skeptical and offended by the crying out and falling down that was happening in response to Wesley’s preaching. A physician became convinced of the authenticity of what was happening because someone he knew well became instantaneously healed. A disapproving Quaker who observed the proceedings with frowns suddenly fell, slain in the spirit. One woman, offended upon seeing another woman fall down crying aloud, herself fell down and cried out just as loudly, which set off a chain reaction of several others falling down in quick succession.¹⁰

⁸ Randy Clark, *There Is More!: The Secret to Experiencing God’s Power to Change Your Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Chosen, 2013), 177.

⁹ Hyatt, *2000 Years Of Charismatic Christianity*, 102.

¹⁰ Billman, *The Supernatural Thread in Methodism*, 26–27.

This concern with tangible spiritual manifestations in the experience of the Holy Spirit would continue throughout Wesley's ministry. In fact, he not only noted them and looked for them, he desired them, and was concerned when there was no visible evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in the people he ministered to. "John Cennick, one of Wesley's early associates, claimed that 'frequently when none were agitated in the meetings, Wesley prayed, 'Lord! Where are thy tokens and signs?' And I don't remember ever to have seen it otherwise that on his so praying several were seized and screamed out.'"¹¹

Those "tokens and signs" could bring a charge of enthusiasm from outsiders who were skeptical.¹² Wesley also conceded that false experiences of the Holy Spirit were a reality and a legitimate reason for the reservation some might have against supernatural experiences of the Holy Spirit.¹³ However, Wesley cautioned against attributing to natural causes what was the genuine work of the Holy Spirit, acknowledging that we grieve God "by blaspheming his work among us, imputing it either to nature, to the force of imagination and animal spirits, or even to the delusion of the devil."¹⁴

Not all manifestations had to be overtly supernatural. Just as in the early church, as Hilary of Poitiers (c. 315-67) describes the first encounter with the Holy Spirit as "intense joy,"¹⁵ manifestations of the Holy Spirit could be in the emotions as well as in

¹¹ Ibid., 30. With a quotation from John Cennick, "An Account of the Most Remarkable Occurrences in the Awakenings at Bristol and Kingswood," *The Moravian Messenger*, vol. 16.

¹² Joseph W Cunningham, "A New Trajectory in Wesleyan Pneumatology: 'Perceptible Inspiration' Reconsidered," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 45, no. 2 (September 2010): 256.

¹³ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit -- In Biblical Teaching, Through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2013), 285.

¹⁴ Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1872, 1-4:204.

¹⁵ Kilian McDonnell and George T Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 325.

the body. Among such manifestations could be, “weeping, violently shaking, crying out, losing consciousness, falling down, and occasionally becoming uncontrollably agitated during his meetings.”¹⁶ It would be wise to not make our expectations too narrow or specific regarding how the Holy Spirit encounters a person.

From examining the nature of the early Methodist movement, we can see that the revival was accompanied by signs and wonders. Supernatural and unnatural expressions of spiritual experience were the order of the day. These manifestations brought some controversy and scorn, but Wesley persevered through these in order to allow God to work in the manner he willed, and the fruit of revival confirmed the work. As present-day Methodists or mainline Christians, we do not need to be offended at what may seem to be fanatical behavior. To curb these expressions may put us at risk of curbing the genuine work of the Holy Spirit.

Christian Perfection as the Second Blessing of the Holy Spirit

For Wesley, conversion was not simply regeneration by faith, but it encompassed “the gift of faith, justification, regeneration (or new birth), and the witness of the Spirit,”¹⁷ with the latter being an especially important concern for Wesley. He was insistent that true conversion is accompanied by a “witness of the Spirit...more an inner conviction than a feeling.”¹⁸ This can be understood as the First Blessing, the first

¹⁶ Billman, *The Supernatural Thread in Methodism*, 31.

¹⁷ Henry H. Knight, III, “The Transformation of the Human Heart: The Place of Conversion in Wesley’s Theology,” in *Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition*, ed. Kenneth J Collins and John H Tyson (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 44.

¹⁸ Henry H. Knight, III, “The Transformation of the Human Heart,” 46.

encounter with the Holy Spirit. This experience of the Holy Spirit brought about the assurance that one was truly a Christian, a child of God.

However, beyond assurance, Wesley also looked for an even fuller work of the Spirit in entire sanctification. “Wesley wanted nothing less than a living faith in Christ which was ‘inseparable from a sense of pardon for all past, and freedom from all present sins.’”¹⁹ This freedom from the power of sin in the present was more significant and central than the external manifestations of the Holy Spirit, far more important than “swoonings” or loud cries.

Wesley believed that one could experience this entire sanctification in a moment, transforming a person and bringing them to a state where they were completely motivated by love for God and people and free from the power of sin. This experience would be known variously as the Second Blessing, entire sanctification, Christian Perfection and even later, the indwelling, filling and baptism of the Holy Spirit. The use of these terms was nearly interchangeable and there was much confusion both within the Methodist movement and amongst its detractors. And yet, as much confusion as it brought, Wesley insisted upon this doctrine as a cornerstone of Methodism. In a letter to Samuel Beardsley, he writes, “Never be ashamed of the old Methodist Doctrine. Press all believers to go on to perfection. Insist everywhere on the Second Blessing, as receivable in a moment, and receivable now, by simple faith.”²⁰

¹⁹ Kenneth J Collins, *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 61–62.

²⁰ John Wesley and George Eayrs, *Letters of John Wesley: A Selection of Important and New Letters with Introductions and Biographical Notes* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 224–25.

The way in which Wesley developed this understanding was not systematic but involved a common-sense pragmatism applied to Scripture and experience. As a result, there would be some inconsistencies to be worked out in terms of concepts and terminology. At the beginnings of his relationship with the Moravians, Wesley was influenced by the preacher, Christian David, at the Moravian settlement of Herrnhut. David preached that there was a difference between someone who was justified through a measure of faith in Christ, but who had yet to receive the “indwelling of the Holy Ghost.”²¹ Wood finds that “Wesley’s critics as early as 1742 also understood Wesley to equate “the indwelling of the Spirit” with full sanctification.”

“I desire not a more consistent account of my principles than he has himself given in the following words” that a justified believer “hath not yet, in the full and proper sense, a new and clean heart, or the indwelling of the Spirit.” One who was sanctified was described as one who had attained “the last and highest state of perfection in this life. For then are the faithful born again in the full and perfect sense. Then have they the indwelling of the Spirit.”²²

What this meant for Wesley then was that the initial blessing of assurance of salvation, while also being an experience of the Holy Spirit, was not the fullness of the conversion experience which would only be complete in entire sanctification. In this he was at odds with a Lutheran or Calvinist understanding of salvation which was constrained to justification.

²¹ J. Steven O’Malley, “Exploring the Background for the Pentecost Connection in Early Methodism,” in *The Continuing Relevance of Wesleyan Theology: Essays in Honor of Laurence W. Wood*, ed. Nathan Crawford (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 32.

²² Laurence W Wood, “Pentecostal Sanctification in Wesley and Early Methodism,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 34, no. 1 (1999): 28. With quotes from John Wesley, “The Principles of a Methodist,” in *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*, ed. Rupert E Davies, vol. 9, *Works of John Wesley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 64-65.

This distinction between the assurance of salvation by faith and entire sanctification with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was not an easy or clear distinction to grasp. Two of his closest associates, John Fletcher and Joseph Benson, thought they were defending Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection when they described entire sanctification as "receiving the Holy Spirit."²³ I believe Wesley was culpable for this confusion because he was known to equate entire sanctification with the "indwelling of the Spirit." For Benson and especially for Fletcher, these were synonymous terms. However, "In his 'Plain Account of Christian Perfection,' Wesley says the basic meaning of the phrase, 'receive the Spirit,' is the witness of the Spirit."²⁴ His real concern was that no Christian would be made insecure about their salvation because they had not experienced entire sanctification. By saying that receiving the Holy Spirit was entire sanctification, it was possible that a new Christian might begin to question their salvation, wondering whether they had received the Holy Spirit.

Wesley did not have the patience to clarify the terms. He writes in a December 28, 1770 letter to Joseph Benson, "I have no time to throw away in contending for words...If they like to call this 'receiving the Holy Ghost,' they may. Only the phrase, in that sense, is not scriptural, and not quite proper; for they all 'received the Holy Ghost,' when they were justified."²⁵ Though Wesley was not concerned for terminology, a closer

²³ Laurence W Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism: Rediscovering John Fletcher as Wesley's Vindicator and Designated Successor* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 37.

²⁴ Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, 42.

²⁵ Wesley and Eayrs, *Letters of John Wesley: A Selection of Important and New Letters with Introductions and Biographical Notes*, 161.

concern for unambiguous language concerning receiving vs. the indwelling of the Holy Spirit could have spared him from much controversy and misunderstanding.

However, Wesley had a distaste for jargon and always strove to speak in plain rather than technical language.

I labour to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood, all which are not used in common life; and, in particular, those kinds of technical terms that so frequently occur in Bodies of Divinity; those modes of speaking which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but which to common people are an unknown tongue.²⁶

While this is admirable and quite effective when preaching to the common public, yet when discoursing with theologically minded people, it leaves much room for a diversity of interpretation that caused confusion.

In this he was helped by John Fletcher. John Fletcher had followed Wesley's example by entering the priesthood in the Anglican church. He was a respected priest and scholar, and in his writings, attempted to explain Wesley's understanding of Christian Perfection. It was Fletcher who explicitly connected perfection, or entire sanctification in the Wesleyan sense, with Holy Spirit baptism or the receiving of the Holy Spirit.²⁷ He eventually favored the term, "baptism of the Holy Spirit," and this provided the groundwork for later Holiness and Pentecostal understandings of the Holy Spirit as coming upon a Christian not only for sanctification but also for supernatural power.²⁸

One can see the progression that would naturally flow from the Methodists to the Pentecostal/Charismatics. Especially as their understanding evolved through a constant

²⁶ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, Third Edition, vol. 5 (London, UK: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 2.

²⁷ Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, 59.

²⁸ Hyatt, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity*, 106.

interaction and rediscovering of the Scriptures, ancient tradition as well as pragmatic need and present experience, we can see a fuller understanding of Holy Spirit experience come into being. Wesley could not have fully known at the time but his concern for sanctification would enable Christians to also experience God's power in healing and ultimately in evangelistic witness.

As I study this early revival movement, a concern that I have for present day understandings of Holy Spirit experience is that by and large, there is less emphasis on sanctification as an experience of the Holy Spirit. Most of the charismatic concern of our time seems to be in terms of miraculous power, such as power to heal disease or deliver people from demonic bondage. I believe these are wonderful aspects of the Holy Spirit and quite central to the mission of the church. However, without also holding onto the power of the Holy Spirit to sanctify the believer, we can run into issues of character that can derail our Christian witness. I would like to see a reclaiming of sanctification, even Christian Perfection, as a primary goal of a modern-day Christian in their pursuit of Holy Spirit experience.

In the next section, I will examine a foundational means by which the Methodists and Wesley sought out the experience of God.

Charismatic Sacramentarians

It is commonly known that John Wesley was a lifelong Anglican, being an ordained priest until his death and never breaking away from the Anglican Church. From this soil we see the seedbed of a sacramental ecclesiology and theology of worship. Contrary to much of the Pentecostal discussion surrounding Wesley, which may see the

Methodist movement as a kind of charismatic movement, the actual workings of the movement continued to be quite institutional, which the system of “conferences, classes, and bands should have demonstrated, and those institutional features were a key aspect of its success.”²⁹

And so, it is not surprising that for Wesley, the way one experienced the reality of God was to some degree sacramental in terms of agency. He would call the sacraments and other ordinances of the church, as well as less institutional expressions of piety, “means of grace.”³⁰ These means of grace were a contact point at which God and humanity might meet. It was not formulaic or automatic, but they were simply opportunities that put the Christian in position to experience God.

This is a distinctive feature of the Wesleyan movement. It really married the traditional, institutional elements of the historic Christian religion with a freshly experiential approach that emphasized an experience of the heart as well as tangible effects in the material world, including in the Christian’s own life and society. This was the genius of Wesley and one of the reasons why I believe the Methodist movement attained so much traction. In contrast to the mystical Moravians from whom Wesley learned to seek out spiritual experience and assurance, the Methodists were far more pragmatic and able to translate spiritual realities to the common man using familiar and sensible structures, methods and disciplines.

Also, in contrast to the high church Anglicans, Wesley did not view going through the forms of religion as sufficient but insisted on a spiritual reality in the soul of

²⁹ James E Pedlar, “Ecclesial Institutions as Means of Grace: A Wesleyan View of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 49, no. 1 (2014): 120.

³⁰ Pedlar, “Ecclesial Institutions as Means of Grace,” 114.

the believer to make those religious forms and traditions come alive. Wesley's brother, Charles, expressed this in a sermon he preached at the University of Oxford:

He “fasts twice in a week,” uses all the means of grace, is constant at church and sacrament; yea, and “gives tithes of all that he has;” does all the good that he can: “Touching the righteousness of the law,” he is “blameless.” He wants nothing of godliness, but the power; nothing of religion, but the spirit; nothing of Christianity, but the truth and the life. But know ye not, that, however highly esteemed among men such a Christian as this may be, he is an abomination in the sight of God?³¹

But much as Jesus, in condemning the Pharisee's neglect of justice, mercy and faith, still affirmed their practice of tithing (Mt 23:23), so does the Wesleyan movement encourage heart religion and spiritual experience while affirming the tangible practices of traditional religion.

In fact, the early Oxford Holy Club era of the Methodist movement found Wesley and his associates earning the derisive nickname, among others, “the Sacramentarians.”³² It is interesting to speculate that this name instead of “Methodists” could have been the name that stayed with the movement. The largest present-day Wesleyan body could have been called the United Sacramentarian Church! The Oxford Methodists, influenced by John Clayton, a member of the club and a tutor of Brasenose College, practiced an at least weekly observance of the Eucharist,³³ and understood that an even more desirable ideal would be daily observance.

³¹ Charles Wesley, “Awake, Thou That Sleepest,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, by John Wesley, Third Edition, vol. 5 (London, UK: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 19–20.

³² Mark H. Mann, “Wesley, Word, and Table: The Rise and Fall of Eucharistic Practice in Early Methodism,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 51, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 57.

³³ Geordan Hammond, *John Wesley in America: Restoring Primitive Christianity* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 30–31.

With such a heritage in observing the Eucharist, Sanders asks, “How does it happen, considering its Wesleyan roots, that American Methodism places so little value upon the sacraments?”³⁴ As the American Methodists split from their Anglican roots to become a new church, they also laid down the conditions to lose connection with their high church sacramental heritage, despite Wesley’s best attempts to guide and instruct the American Methodist Church from across the sea. His balanced understanding of sacramental worship being a true spiritual encounter did not ultimately bridge the distance.³⁵

Other factors for the demotion of the sacraments are the frontier character of much of American Methodism. As circuit riders pushed west with the settlers, there were fewer preachers who could administer the Eucharist in comparison to the geographic distance they covered. This would mean less frequent sacramental worship.

Periodically the travelling elder would come to preach, celebrate Holy Communion, and supervise the ministry. This became regularized as at least a ‘quarterly conference’ in each area; and this is the reason that early Methodists got used to quarterly, rather than weekly, celebrations of Holy Communion. The sacrament was celebrated when the ordained elder was present.³⁶

As the local churches were run by lay preachers who could not administer the sacraments, frontier Methodists simply did without. Their ecclesiology took the shape of the wide-open wilderness of the North American frontier, far from the steeples of the Church of England.

³⁴ Paul S Sanders, “The Sacraments in Early American Methodism,” *Church History* 26, no. 4 (December 1957): 355.

³⁵ Sanders, “The Sacraments in Early American Methodism,” 370.

³⁶ Dennis M Campbell, “Ministry and Itinerancy in Methodism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, ed. James E Kirby and William J Abraham (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 14, 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199696116.013.0015.

With such infrequent observance of the Eucharist, and with such a distance from Wesley's direct hand guiding the churches, one can see why the sacramental disciplines would begin to lose influence, becoming something done out of tradition than out of vital experience. We may imagine that for later Methodists, it was difficult to understand the significance of the sacraments. And without the right heart and attitude in observing them, it is possible that the rituals lost their power. This was because "The Lord's Supper was a real means of grace, but the emphasis is placed upon the disposition of the communicant in his solemn remembrance of the Lord's death."³⁷ How you observed the ritual mattered, and without the heart behind it, the ritual mattered less.

This emphasis on "inner subjectivity" is something Wesley embraced through many influences, such as the ancient writer, Macarius.³⁸ With the loss of a personal expectation of spiritual experience in the sacrament, this form of worship loses its substance, and with it we lose a valuable help to Christian spirituality. A reclaiming of Wesleyan spirituality should include a reexamination of sacramental worship and the means of grace as contact points for genuine, subjective experiences of the Holy Spirit.

Historically, there is a basis for sacramental worship as a vehicle for real experiences of the Holy Spirit. For example, the early Church Father, Tertullian, gives insight into the importance of the Eucharist as a completion of the conversion process. He records that the Eucharist was celebrated as part of the baptismal rite of his day, coming at the end after immersion in water and the imposition of hands to receive the Holy Spirit. It is only in this context of fellowship in the common meal that the newly baptized

³⁷ Hoyoung Lee, "Experiencing the Spirit in Wesley and Macarius," in *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Bks, 1998), 239.

³⁸ Lee, "Experiencing the Spirit in Wesley and Macarius," 200.

members ask for the charisms of the Holy Spirit “with hands raised and extended in prayer.”³⁹ So here we see that the Eucharist was instrumental in conveying spiritual power and gifts to new Christians.

For Wesley, “grace is considered synonymous with the empowering presence and work of the Spirit.”⁴⁰ Pedlar notes that “Wesley employed the theological category “means of grace” as his preferred way of talking about the sacraments.”⁴¹ We can begin to see why the sacraments, and particularly the Eucharist, was so important for Wesley. In this rite, Wesley minimized the memorialism that dominates much of contemporary Methodist approaches to the Lord’s Supper. Instead, “Wesley affirmed the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.”⁴² Christ is present in the elements, not in a transubstantiated way, but through his Spirit.

An ordinance of the church that Wesley curiously did not emphasize as much as he did the Eucharist is the rite of confirmation with the laying on of hands. The purpose of this rite was to convey the Holy Spirit to the believer. Though from ancient times this part of the conversion experience was a part of the baptismal liturgy, it was also seen as a distinct part. In fact, by the fourth century, because of the need of a bishop to administer this sacrament, confirmation began to be seen as a separate rite from baptism.⁴³

³⁹ McDonnell and Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 100.

⁴⁰ Lee, “Experiencing the Spirit in Wesley and Macarius,” 201.

⁴¹ Pedlar, “Ecclesial Institutions as Means of Grace,” 114.

⁴² Mann, “Wesley, Word, and Table: The Rise and Fall of Eucharistic Practice in Early Methodism,” 54.

⁴³ F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., “Confirmation,” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 398–99.

This rite could very well be the most underestimated tradition in the Christian church. For modern Protestants, it may simply be an opportunity to reaffirm the Christian faith they inherited through infant baptism. But this completely ignores the primary purpose of the ancient rite, which was to transfer the Holy Spirit to the confirmand. Even Wesley did not fully grasp the significance of this. “Wesley also was confirmed, but apparently it was not a meaningful experience for him, and without any explanation, he deleted it from *The Sunday Service*.”⁴⁴

And yet other Methodists experienced the presence of God powerfully in confirmation. For example, Mary Fletcher, the wife of John Fletcher, Wesley’s close associate, described confirmation as a “rousing ordinance.” She writes in her journal that “For some months after, every time I approached the Lord’s table, I had a very peculiar sense of his presence, and sometimes I felt as if the Lord Jesus did from his own hand give me the sacred emblems of his body and blood.”⁴⁵

Here we see the close association of the sacraments working in conjunction. In her confirmation, Mary Fletcher had a powerful spiritual experience, and in the Eucharist, that experience is sustained and intensified. She may be using figurative language, but she may also be describing a spiritual reality, that the presence of Jesus Christ is visceral and tangible in the Eucharist for some people. But for Mary Fletcher this was initiated in confirmation.

Wesley taught and encouraged the Methodists to observe all the means of grace, including Holy Communion as a matter of regular discipline. It was important to him, not

⁴⁴ Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, 339.

⁴⁵ Henry Moore, *The Life of Mrs. Mary Fletcher* (New York, NY: J. Soule and T. Mason, 1818), 24.

because he was a religious high churchman, but because he knew one could encounter God in a very real way through these tangible means. Far from discounting these means as merely external religious activity, Wesley connected external expression with spiritual experience.

This was a major source of contention between him and the Moravians and was one of the main reasons they parted ways. Though he owed a great debt for his spiritual awakening to the Moravians, he nevertheless eventually split from them. He found that they “did not exercise enough care in practicing the means of grace such as prayer, fasting, Communion, and Bible study.”⁴⁶ In fact, the Moravians viewed such disciplines as actually evil if a person did not already have the complete assurance of faith in Christ. They were concerned that those spiritual works were a danger to faith. The Moravian leader, Philip Henry Molther was the main catalyst for Wesley separating from the Moravians at Fetter Lane. “According to Molther, the only means of grace was Christ; according to Wesley, there were many means of grace, all leading the soul to Christ.”⁴⁷

In today’s culture that is becoming increasingly unchurched while at the same time seeking real spiritual experience, perhaps revisiting a sacramental approach to spiritual practice coupled with an emphasis on the heart and the reality of spiritual substance in the practice is necessary to facilitate genuine encounters with God. Demonstrating to people that it is possible to experience God, not only in mystical stillness, but also in tangible and practical disciplines may be helpful for those who need

⁴⁶ Winfield H Bevins, “The Historical Development of Wesley’s Doctrine of the Spirit,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 41, no. 2 (2006): 168.

⁴⁷ J. E. Hutton, *A History of the Moravian Church*, Second Edition (London, UK: Moravian Publication Office, 1909), 298.

action and practice in order to learn. In Wesley, we have both the heart of the mystic and the hands of the common citizen, a balance that we would be wise to reclaim.

Conclusion

We have seen how the Wesleyan revival, in contrast to the mainline expressions of it in present day, was markedly supernatural and Holy Spirit empowered. Though rationalistic Christians today may find this history uncomfortable or objectionable, and though they may try to suppress it in their understanding of their Protestant heritage, the historical record remains as a witness and testimony to a different, more vibrant era of Christian witness and experience. Perhaps, as we face the declining influence of the church in society, we can be open to rediscovering and reclaiming this aspect of our Christian heritage.

For the purposes of my project, there are a couple of aspects of the Wesleyan revival that I would like to explore specifically. First is a sacramental approach to encountering the Holy Spirit. In my own congregation, some people are uncomfortable with present day Charismatic/Pentecostal methods and modes of seeking the Holy Spirit. Bizarre manifestations or even falling under the power of the Holy Spirit can be off-putting or intimidating, just as they were in Wesley's time. Without denigrating these expressions or preventing them, I would like to explore using the means of grace that Wesley encouraged, particularly the Eucharist, as a more familiar and accessible point of contact for mainline Christians who desire a more tangible experience of God's Spirit.

Secondly, I would like to pursue entire sanctification or Christian Perfection as a highly relevant manifestation of the Holy Spirit for modern day believers and unbelievers

alike. As much as experiencing the physical power of the Holy Spirit upon us is memorable and encouraging, without sanctification, our daily experience of God will be discouraging. Especially as in our day and age, people are struggling more than ever with addictions and persistent sins, a welcome aspect of the Gospel of Jesus would be freedom from the power of sin and bondage. And yet most of our teaching on this kind of discipleship is centered around our own efforts and willpower. How refreshing that John Wesley looked not only to discipline but to the power of the Holy Spirit to do in a moment what we could never do in all our striving. Such an approach would emphasize prayer and expectant faith in addition to instructions about how to live.

If we can add these to the fully evolved theology of the Holy Spirit that receives miraculous power, I believe we will have a more far-reaching Christian witness than ever before. Truly, times of revival can come again. And they can exceed the culture-transforming work that God did through the Wesleyan movement.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

John Wesley is often credited with formulating the basis for later Pentecostalism. His theology of experience, particularly the experience of the Holy Spirit as a subsequent blessing after conversion, laid the groundwork for a Pentecostal understanding of a baptism of the Holy Spirit that would empower Christians for witness and mission. Wesley viewed this experiential theology as a Methodist distinctive that was his movement's contribution within the larger body of Christ.¹

Wesley's close associate, John Fletcher, helped to facilitate the theological evolution from Wesley to Pentecostalism. He associated the second blessing of the Holy Spirit, most closely identified with sanctification, with the language of "baptism of the Holy Spirit."² This was more technical language than Wesley liked, and there was a period of controversy about it, but crystallizing this concept and terminology made Christian Perfection more transferrable to other movements.

This understanding was carried forward by the Holiness Movement, which was the seedbed out of which sprouted Pentecostalism proper. Pentecostal theology continued

¹ Winfield H Bevens, "The Historical Development of Wesley's Doctrine of the Spirit," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 41, no. 2 (2006): 240.

² Wood, "Pentecostal Sanctification in Wesley and Early Methodism," 253.

to develop through various movements, shaped by the Charismatic Renewal of the mid twentieth century, then through later movements such as the Third Wave movement and the revival sometimes called the Toronto Blessing. It now faces new opportunities in ecumenism and global theology.

Pentecostal theology in academia has not been a priority even for Pentecostals at large due to the emphasis on personal experience rather than the systematization of such experiences in general. However, Pentecostal scholarship is gaining traction and there are many excellent scholars in the field of Pentecostal theology. Pentecostal theologians are branching out from purely historical-Biblical concerns to ecumenical and systematic theologies.³ The theological trend is moving away from the dogma of the twentieth-century and venturing into the exciting new vistas of what Randy Clark calls, “Holy Spirit ecumenism.”⁴ This is the increasing openness different denominations and traditions have toward one another because of a shared experience of the Holy Spirit. Questions centered around Spirit baptism, which Macchia, affirms as the “crown jewel”⁵ of Pentecostal theology, are giving way to questions concerning the more practical issues of our time.

It is my hope that loosening the grip of Pentecostal theology on our present understandings of the Holy Spirit and Holy Spirit baptism will pave the way for a reclaiming of that Spirit heritage in my own denomination, the United Methodist Church.

³ Amos Yong, “Pentecostalism and the Theological Academy,” *Theology Today* 64, no. 2 (July 2007): 248.

⁴ Randy Clark, *Baptized in the Spirit: God’s Presence Resting Upon You With Power* (Destiny Image, 2017), 108.

⁵ Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 20.

My project is intimately concerned with seeing a return to and extension from the spiritual vitality of the Wesleyan revival. But for such a move to gain acceptance, it must employ methods that affirm the grace of God already at work in this part of the body, rather than violently shoehorn a traditional Pentecostalism into an institution, structure and community that are not built for such theologies and methodologies.

In the end, we will find that the Holy Spirit is wonderfully sovereign and creative in his workings in people. The trends we see in the New Testament where the Spirit is active are not necessarily normative for all Christians in all times. While there are consistencies that we must pay attention to, there are also sovereign irregularities to the Spirit's movement. Truly, "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."⁶

In the rest of this chapter, we will look at the theological roots of Pentecostalism in early Methodist theology. Then look at how that transitioned into a more concrete understanding of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as associated with tongues. We will then see how this understanding has evolved into a view of Spirit baptism that allows for more diversity in manifestation. I will then reflect on how this Holy Spirit diversity is a crucial theological development for the growth of Pentecostal theology beyond denominations and older church traditions to be a gift to the ecumenical church, allowing the move of the Spirit to extend into previously closed off denominations and traditions and on into being an instrument for global witness.

⁶ John 3:8, New Revised Standard Version. All Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Wesleyan Roots of Pentecostal Theology

It is one of the tragic developments in current mainline Wesleyan denominations that there is a distrust of Pentecostalism. This is a reality in the more liberal segments of the United Methodist Church, the largest Methodist denomination. The tongue-speaking and the loud, emotion-filled worship services of many Pentecostal churches are antithetical to the more traditional, liturgical worship experiences in many United Methodist churches. Although early Methodist worship gatherings would have more closely resembled a Pentecostal worship experience, today's Methodists may be quite unfamiliar with these early modes of Holy Spirit experience. They may even be embarrassed to be associated with Pentecostalism at all.⁷

In contrast, John Wesley's theology was drastically altered through his own conversion experience when he felt his heart "strangely warmed."⁸ He began to preach salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, but he also taught that one should know that one has this saving faith through experience. It was this experiential element that made John Wesley an eminently practical theologian.⁹ And it was this theological approach, more than anything else, that makes John Wesley the source of modern-day Pentecostalism.

Others might trace Pentecostalism to the development of a "second blessing" theology in Wesley's teachings, an experience of the Holy Spirit distinct from and often

⁷ Cheryl Bridges Johns, "Partners in Scandal: Wesleyan and Pentecostal Scholarship," *Pneuma* 21, no. 2 (September 1999): 183.

⁸ John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley*, ed. Nehemiah Curnock, vol. 1 (London, UK: Robert Culley; Charles H. Kelly, 1909), 475.

⁹ Amos Yong, "A Heart Strangely Warmed on the Middle Way?: The Wesleyan Witness in a Pluralistic World," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 48, no. 1 (2013): 7.

subsequent to the experience of salvation by faith. Wesley did espouse such concepts, but he was not systematic in his formulations of them. He was also not dogmatic. He might describe an assurance of faith or salvation as being a mark of genuine faith. He might talk about victory over sin, and he did emphasize greatly a doctrine of Christian Perfection as the so-called second blessing, an experience of God's grace at work in a believer that not only saw them forgiven and saved but freed completely from the grip of conscious sin.

However, Wesley was unique in the argumentative ethos of the Reformation and the period following in that his stated goal was unity with Christian brethren, not separation. He did not always live up to this ideal, and he had his fair share of controversies and splits from other streams of the church, such as the Moravians and the Calvinistic Methodists. But in his explicit teachings he strove for a graciousness that could bear the brunt of differences in thoughts and opinions about doctrine for the greater goal of Christian unity.

He writes in his manifesto on the doctrine of Christian Perfection,

Beware of tempting others to separate from you. Give no offence which can possibly be avoided; see that your practice be in all things suitable to your profession, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour. Be particularly careful in speaking of yourself: You may not, indeed, deny the work of God; but speak of it, when you are called thereto, in the most inoffensive manner possible. Avoid all magnificent, pompous words; indeed, you need give it no general name; neither perfection, sanctification, the second blessing, nor the having attained. Rather speak of the particulars which God has wrought for you. You may say, 'At such a time I felt a change which I am not able to express; and since that time, I have not felt pride, or self-will, or anger, or unbelief; nor anything but a fulness of love to God and to all mankind.'¹⁰

¹⁰ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, Third Edition, vol. 11 (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 434–35.

What is notable is that while he acknowledges such terms as “perfection,” “sanctification,” and the “second blessing,” all interchangeable terms that describe entire sanctification, the being made perfect in love, he does not insist on them. Instead he emphasizes the description of the experience as something one has personally undergone or witnessed. It is a testimonial approach to doctrine, which also leads Wesley to be frustratingly imprecise in his terminology regarding distinctively Methodist phenomena.

As demonstrated in my Historical Foundations section, John Fletcher sought to pin down these concepts using more technical language, such as “baptism of the Holy Spirit” as the favored term for the second blessing. This was the impetus for later Holiness and Pentecostal movements to develop their own theological understandings of a subsequent experience of the Holy Spirit. And yet, as often happens, later interpreters of Wesley defined the original concepts with greater precision and technicality than may have been warranted. And this can mislead us into assuming Wesley was more dogmatic and systematic than he was.¹¹

Which leads me to my understanding of the true underpinnings of Pentecostal theology in John Wesley’s theology. The basis for Pentecostalism in Wesley was not at its root simply subsequence, or the concept of a second blessing, but the approach of adjusting one’s theology to one’s experience of God. This experiential approach to theology is what truly set Methodism apart from its Anglican roots. Classical Anglicanism held up Scripture, tradition and reason as the pillars of determining divine

¹¹ Albert Outler, credited with coining the term, “Wesleyan Quadrilateral,” even expresses his regret at having come up with what became a too often misunderstood and misappropriated verbiage in: Albert Cook Outler, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral in John Wesley,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20, no. 1 (1985): 16.

truth. Wesley, while not systematically laying out a four-fold approach, evidences by his teaching and action that he truly did operate with an additional arbiter of divine truth, which was personal experience.

Holiness and Phoebe Palmer

In the next century after the original Wesleyan revival, there were some in the Methodist churches who sought to recapture the fervor and holiness of the earlier era. The most prominent leader of this movement was Phoebe Palmer, an un-ordained but devout Methodist laywoman in New York.¹² Her influence was underappreciated in the years after her passing, but she was a true theological innovator, taking the Wesleyan emphasis on sanctification and making adjustments based on her own experience of God, a tactic that was in kinship with her spiritual progenitor, Wesley.

What is interesting about Palmer is that though she sought an experience of sanctification and invited others to have such an experience, she sought first and foremost to be a “Bible Christian.”¹³ This is a principal element in her approach as she, like Wesley, combined a desire for a spiritual experience with convictions that she received to a great degree from her understanding of the Bible. Her desire for sanctification and a vivid experience of a second blessing increased as she witnessed these phenomena in the people around her, but when she was not experiencing the same sorts of manifestations, she turned to God directly, who revealed himself to her in the Bible.

¹² Eddie L. Hyatt, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity: A 21st Century Look at Church History from a Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspective* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2002), 125.

¹³ Elaine A. Heath, *Naked Faith: The Mystical Theology of Phoebe Palmer* (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co, 2010), 20.

John Wesley looked to the Scripture for understanding the way to salvation, and he went about expositing and applying its truths to daily living.¹⁴ This may in some ways be even more true of Phoebe Palmer, who looked to the Bible not only as a sacred text to be expositied and applied, but as “the all-commanding chart by which the propriety of each successive step was determined.”¹⁵ This was in some ways a more aggressive approach to Scriptural obedience than Wesley would likely have been comfortable with, because as much as Wesley was himself a Bible Christian, a man of One Book, he was also a man of reason. That quality might have constrained him from the hyper-spiritualization of Scripture which Palmer tended toward.

Phoebe Palmer’s most distinctive innovation was what has become known as “altar theology.” In a stroke of hermeneutical creativity, she connects Exodus 29:36-37, which talks about the process for purifying the altar, to the heavenly altar which is purified by the blood of Jesus Christ. Just as the Old Testament altar sanctified every sacrifice that was placed on the altar, so the New Testament altar, which is Christ, sanctifies every person who offers themselves wholly to him.

What is important for Palmer is that she feels obligated to believe that this is true by merit of it being in the Scriptures.¹⁶ Now we see an approach to Scripture that sees its truths as a spiritual reality that, when appropriated by the Christian by faith, becomes material reality. This conviction that the Scriptures must determine reality works in

¹⁴ Ian Maddock, *Men of One Book: A Comparison of Two Methodist Preachers, John Wesley and George Whitefield* (Cambridge, UK: Casemate Publishers, 2011), 32.

¹⁵ Phoebe Palmer, *The Way of Holiness: With Notes by the Way: Being a Narrative of Experience Resulting from a Determination to Be a Bible Christian* (New York, NY: Piercy and Reed, 1843), vi.

¹⁶ Palmer, *The Way of Holiness*, 60.

partnership with the Wesleyan approach of experience shaping theology. Here we see the grace of God and the free will of the Christian working together to bring about Scriptural reality.

Combining Biblical conviction with experiential data, Phoebe Palmer constructs her innovative, “shorter way” to holiness. The components of the shorter way are three-fold: entire consecration, faith and testimony.¹⁷ This expression of practical theology influenced the American religious landscape for generations. Holiness proponents now had a concrete, practical guide to attaining what they previously pursued with a great deal of ambiguity. The “shorter way” gave earnest Christians something they could do, while still acknowledging that it was the grace of God that gave them the opportunity to do it.

The term, “shorter way,” can be a bit misleading. It was not necessarily a shortcut to sanctification. It was not less rigorous. Entire consecration on the altar meant giving your whole life to Jesus Christ and doing that continually. Heath also points out that it “does not then imply absence of process or journey. Nor does the phrase necessarily imply instantaneousness over process. Rather, the word ‘shorter’ underscores the potential for entering the way of holiness sooner rather than later, and gives a method for entering the way of holiness.”¹⁸

One of the issues with Palmer’s approach to Scripture is that not only might one misinterpret Scripture, which any interpreter of the Bible might do, but because of the revelatory, hyper-spiritual nature of a hermeneutic like Palmer’s, one may not realize or be open to admitting the possibility of error. For example, Palmer believed that in order

¹⁷ Heath, *Naked Faith*, 92.

¹⁸ Heath, *Naked Faith*, 93.

continue in sanctification, one had to keep their lives on the altar. Whenever a Christian decided they could not continue to walk in submission to Christ, for whatever reason, the sacrifice was then taken off the altar, and that Christian would lose their state of sanctification.¹⁹

One might see where this might be problematic. When a sacrifice was placed on the altar in the Old Testament, it was generally consumed by fire. Even if it were to be taken off the altar, there is no indication in the Scriptures that the offering would then cease to be sanctified. Even when it is eaten, it is to be eaten in a prescribed way because it is holy.

This is not to refute Palmer's experience of gaining or losing a sense of sanctification and holiness. It may very well be that the reality of sanctification, the actualization of righteous behavior and affections in the real experience of the Christian and freedom from conscious sin truly are dependent on a Christian's ongoing surrender and obedience to Christ's commands. But to justify this from Biblical passages concerning the altar is not necessarily good interpretation or even absolutely necessary.

Here is the danger of the Wesleyan and Holiness tendency to reframe theology in accordance with one's own experience, and not only reframing theology, but even Biblical interpretation. One becomes open to misinterpretation with potentially catastrophic blind spots when one justifies experience with creative Scriptural hermeneutics. Gordon Fee cautions, "the Pentecostal must be wary of reforming the biblical data to fit his or her own experience."²⁰ While experience is a help in

¹⁹ Palmer, *The Way of Holiness*, 146–47.

²⁰ Gordon D Fee, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Issue of Separability and Subsequence," *Pneuma* 7, no. 2 (September 1985): 96.

understanding the Scriptures, it is wise to understand the Scriptures in their own right as well as look for personal application. I believe this theological danger continues throughout Pentecostal theology, simply because its roots are so oriented toward an experiential approach.

Classical Pentecostalism

The peculiar spiritual manifestations in the early 1900s centering around Charles Parham and William Seymour form the basis of the Pentecostal revival that is the seedbed of Classical Pentecostalism. Parham was mentor to Seymour, and he formulated the theological position that would define Pentecostalism for much of the next century. This was the understanding of a Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit with the specific manifestation of speaking in other tongues.²¹

It was his insistence that tongues were the only sign of a true baptism of the Holy Spirit that set him apart from the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition he came out of. This theology arose out of Parham's own study of the Scriptures, confirmed by the conclusions his students reached at Bethel Bible College in Topeka, KS. In this, Parham is like Palmer and her independent approach to understanding the Bible. In contrast to John Wesley, who valued the historic interpretations of Scripture afforded to him by church tradition, Parham paid no mind to any interpretation of Holy Spirit baptism that disagreed with his own.

²¹ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 89.

This staunch adherence to the theology of tongues as the sole evidence of a true, Biblical baptism of the Holy Spirit would follow the Pentecostal movement throughout its development, and may explain why Pentecostalism, while growing through mission and witnessing, has had a rocky relationship with the rest of the church-universal. To insist on tongues, especially when reasonable arguments can be made from Scripture that this manifestation of the Spirit may not be normative for all Christians, puts the Pentecostal in the precarious position of invalidating the experience of many in the rest of the global church.

This is unfortunate because speaking in tongues is a wonderful empowering work of the Holy Spirit for the church's mission in the world. Reclaiming the supernatural in the normal experience of the Christian is necessary if the church is going to fulfill its mission. Parham at his heart was a missionary. He wanted to see the church revitalized in its witness to the world. As courageous as he was, his independent approach to theology led to some Scriptural conclusions that discredited him as a leader in the Pentecostal movement. Among the most alarming of these were his racist views based on Anglo-Israelite theology which identified the lost tribes of Israel with the Anglo-Saxon peoples.²²

Parham's spiritual mentee, colleague and successor was William Seymour. Seymour's theology of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in his early years of ministry was taught to him by Parham, so it is no surprise that the same elements are in Seymour's

²² Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 2006), 40.

teachings as well. Like Parham, Seymour initially believed that tongues were the unique and inevitable sign of a baptism of the Holy Spirit.²³

Seymour, however, emphasized the Wesleyan-Holiness distinctive of sanctification as a requirement for the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the Biblical evidence of tongues. In this sense, he remained connected to his Wesleyan roots, advancing the idea that tongues and Spirit baptism empowered the Christian for mission, while sanctification prepared the Christian to receive the Holy Spirit.²⁴ For the early years of his ministry, he continued to give tongues the primacy of place as the evidence of Spirit baptism.

However, Seymour's theology concerning baptism of the Holy Spirit with the "Bible evidence" of tongues changed drastically toward the later years of ministry. And, true to the experiential theology of the Wesleyan and the Holiness movements, he made this shift apparently in response to several negative occurrences involving trusted colleagues. Brathwaite observes, "These individuals who hurt Seymour had three things in common. They were all white; they had all vied for control over all or a portion of the Azusa Street mission; and they all spoke in tongues."²⁵

Seymour changed his previous approach to ministry and theology in these three areas. He ruled that colored people should maintain leadership in his mission. He also

²³ James S Tinney, "William J Seymour: Father of Modern-Day Pentecostalism," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 4, no. 1 (September 1976): 35.

²⁴ Cecil M. Robeck, "William J. Seymour and the 'Bible Evidence,'" in *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008), 77.

²⁵ Renea Brathwaite, "Tongues and Ethics: William J. Seymour and the 'Bible Evidence': a Response to Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.," *Pneuma* 32, no. 2 (2010): 217, doi:10.1163/157007410X509119.

gave himself controlling power over the affairs of the mission. And finally, he rejected tongues as the primary or sole evidence of Spirit baptism, demoting it to being simply one of various evidences, and not the most important one at that. Instead of tongues, Seymour's Azusa Street Mission reclaims divine love as the true evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit.²⁶

Classical Pentecostalism would maintain something closer to Parham's theology throughout the next century. However, the seed that William Seymour planted with his break from Parham's theology is important. I believe having this heritage of an openness to other signs of Holy Spirit baptism will be important in bringing Pentecostal theology into broader acceptance by the church.

Developments in Contemporary Pentecostal Theology

In my view, Pentecostal theology is the most exciting and dynamic field of study in theology today. It is growing out of its classical roots and becoming an extremely flexible theology that has applications in fields beyond traditional domains of Pentecostalism. If one takes Amos Yong's definition of contemporary pentecostalism (not capitalized, as distinguished from Pentecostalism proper) as a more general field of theology with charismatic leanings,²⁷ then the applicability of Pentecostal, or pentecostal, theology grows even broader.

What makes Pentecostal theology so flexible and widely appealing is its very roots in a Wesleyan theological approach; that is, an experiential one. Warrington

²⁶ Robeck, "William J. Seymour and the 'Bible Evidence,'" 81.

²⁷ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 18.

identifies the “core of Pentecostalism” as “shared experiences.”²⁸ In this, he agrees with Anderson, who observes that, “In its beginnings, Pentecostalism in the western world was an ecumenical movement of people claiming a common experience rather than a common doctrine.”²⁹ And this really is the distinctive of Pentecostalism that makes it appeal to people in many different Christian traditions. An experience pays little attention to denominational identities. A person can experience the Holy Spirit in the same way as a Catholic or as a Protestant, as a mainline church member or as a charismatic church member. This experiential component is distinctive of Pentecostal theology and a major contribution to the broader field of theology.³⁰

Today’s trends in Pentecostal theology are moving away from the time-worn arguments about subsequence or initial evidence. The work of theologians such as Dunn, Max Turner and Menzies, among others, have shown us the difficulty of absolute agreement about the nuances of the nature of Spirit baptism. At the end of the day, they can agree that it is an essential experience for Christians to have, however it comes, in whatever order.

The older insistence on tongues as the sole and unique evidence of a true baptism of the Holy Spirit has all but given way in practical dialogue, even while it may persist in the books of various denominational laws. And it may no longer remain in the laws of all traditionally Pentecostal denominations. Gordon Anderson refers to Article VII in the

²⁸ Keith. Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London, UK: T&T Clark, 2008), 20.

²⁹ Allan Heaton Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 2nd Edition (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 60.

³⁰ Terry L Cross, “The Divine-Human Encounter towards a Pentecostal Theology of Experience,” *Pneuma* 31, no. 1 (2009): 9, doi:10.1163/157007409X418121.

Statement of Fundamental Truths set out by the Assemblies of God, “With the baptism in the Holy Ghost come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit . . . a deepened reverence for God . . . , an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work . . . , and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost . . .”³¹ Surprisingly, tongues is not mentioned in this list of experiences accompanying Holy Spirit baptism.

These developments are paving the way for Pentecostalism to become the most ecumenical force in the church today. And it depends on the continued trend of Pentecostals becoming more affirming of other traditions of the church. Gordon recounts a conversation with a non-Pentecostal who said:

If Pentecostals would be willing to admit that non-Pentecostals have vital and powerful spiritual ministries without speaking in tongues, non-Pentecostals would be more inclined to admit that Pentecostals have something unique that the rest of the Christian world does not have. This would make the claims and benefits of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as Pentecostals understand them, more credible.³²

This openness is becoming more and more the reality in Pentecostalism. And “this emphasis on the diversities of the Spirit is a central value of the contemporary ecumenical movement.”³³

This participation of Pentecostal theology in a larger ecumenism is a mutually enhancing move. Pinnock challenges the Pentecostal church to “submit their claims non-

³¹ Gordon L. Anderson, “Baptism in The Holy Spirit, Initial Evidence, And A New Model,” *Enrichment Journal*, 2005, http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200501/20050_071_baptismhs.cfm, accessed 4/2/2017.

³² Anderson, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

³³ Yong, *The Spirit Poured out on All Flesh*, 174.

defensively to other communities and be prepared for some critical evaluation.”³⁴ This will earn the respect of non-Pentecostal Christians in their interaction with Pentecostals. It will also bring necessary correction to unhealthy excesses or narrowness within Pentecostalism. At the same time, the larger church needs the spiritual vitality and success in mission that Pentecostal churches presently enjoy. It is encouraging to note Pentecostals’ increasing participation in even formal movements of ecumenism such as the World Council of Churches.³⁵

Not only is Pentecostal theology serving a growing ecumenism, but it is also the best equipped theology to deal with growing interreligious concerns. Because of its emphasis on experiential spirituality, it can interface with people of other religions who may have had analogous experiences. Yong explicitly ties this facility to historic Wesleyan theologies of prevenient grace and experiential religion. Because the concept of prevenient grace applies to all people in the world before they are Christian, it applies also to those who belong to other religious traditions. “Hence we are invited to approach people of other faiths less as representatives of religious labels than as people made in the image of God and existing within the realm of prevenient grace.”³⁶

Tae Young So elaborates that “as the Holy spirit is relational and responsive to people, the human spirit embraces the relational and responsive image of the Holy spirit. In fact, the relational and responsive image of the Holy spirit is the inherent source of

³⁴ Clark H. Pinnock, “Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit: The Promise of Pentecostal Ecclesiology,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 164.

³⁵ Shane Clifton, “Ecumenism from the Bottom up: A Pentecostal Perspective,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 47, no. 4 (September 2012): 585.

³⁶ Yong, “A Heart Strangely Warmed on the Middle Way?,” 11.

vitality for humans as images of God, and it is that which connects God to humans.”³⁷

This is an experience only a church that honors the work of the Holy Spirit will be able to most effectively offer.

Pentecostal theology still has some work to do to really come into its own as a redemptive offering of the reality of Christ to the world. Studebaker has an interesting challenge to Pentecostal understandings of soteriology. Rather than being content with a Protestant Reformation understanding of soteriology with its primary locus around forgiveness and justification, Studebaker sees the need for Pentecostalism to expand its understanding of salvation as redemptive justification.³⁸ This entails bringing the reality of the Kingdom of God to bear on the holistic condition of the individual and on communities. Salvation goes beyond being justified to being redeemed from the effects of the fall in every sphere of life.

As ecumenism and interreligious interfacing is a growing strength of Pentecostal theology, its universal applicability also makes it well adapted to address modernity and globalization. In an increasingly secular and non-religious culture, Pentecostalism, particularly that segment of the family associated with Word of Faith theology, has a point of connection with a society that is concerned not just with the afterlife but with the present life. The pragmatism of Pentecostal theology, its concern with the present condition of peoples' lives, makes it more relevant to today's culture than many mainline churches that are still concerned more with doctrinal arguments or traditional modes of

³⁷ Tae Young So, “Pentecostal Spirituality as Nurturing Vitality for Human Lives,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18, no. 2 (2009): 261.

³⁸ Steven M. Studebaker, “Pentecostal Soteriology and Pneumatology,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11, no. 2 (April 1, 2003): 266.

worship. Pentecostalism does not balk at secular engagement, whether it be technologies or media.³⁹

Marti, a sociologist observing Oasis Christian Center, a rare megachurch in urban Los Angeles, CA, was surprised at the leadership's approach to its mostly entertainment industry church-goers:

I erroneously expected leaders to domesticate ambition as a way to protect their people from a dangerous world. Instead I found that Oasis intentionally strives for relevance to those in the entertainment industry where success is measured in fame and profit using distinctively religious resources. Oasis leverages its prosperity theology to move members toward a collective—while ego-affirming—vision for their occupations by addressing members' uncertainty and failure amidst the near-constant disappointment and heartache of their work lives.⁴⁰

The surprising success of this urban church is a testament to the relevance of Word of Faith theology to the world of modernity. If this Pentecostal subset can reform itself,⁴¹ it has a valuable contribution to make to the success of the church's mission to a global, modern world.

Part of the balancing act facing Word of Faith theology has to do with its inherent faith-optimism, the tendency of this theology to produce an overly materialistic approach to faith, and generally poor reputation among other Christian traditions and the society at large due to excesses in prosperity theology. Still, Word of Faith should not abandon its

³⁹ Amos Yong, "Academic Glossolalia?: Pentecostal Scholarship, Multidisciplinarity, and the Science-Religion Conversation," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14, no. 1 (October 2005): 63.

⁴⁰ Gerardo Marti, "The Adaptability of Pentecostalism: The Fit between Prosperity Theology and Globalized Individualism in a Los Angeles Church," *Pneuma* 34, no. 1 (2012): 12.

⁴¹ William M R Simpson, "The Significance of Andrew Perriman's Faith, Health and Prosperity in the Word of Faith Debate," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16, no. 1 (October 2007): 95.

material concern. It addresses the needs of the economically and otherwise marginalized and in so doing can be an expression of the justice of God for the historically oppressed.⁴²

At the same time, Word of Faith theology needs to have some framework for dealing with the reality of suffering for many people, even those among its adherents. What is the response to those who make positive declarations that go unfulfilled, sometimes for decades? And what is the response to the suffering of people, other than a call to pray more or believe more? Word of Faith theology must come to grips with what Moltmann would emphasize as a theology of the cross. Is there any redemptive element to suffering that can temper the knee-jerk rejection of it in many Word of Faith and Pentecostal theologies?⁴³

Amos Yong is breaking ground in the complex dynamic between faith-healing, which is an emphasis in Charismatic renewal movements, and people with disabilities. He cautions that “people with disabilities feel even more marginalized in renewal circles because the healing emphasis highlights the deviancy of their condition from what is considered theologically normative.”⁴⁴ He challenges the practice of healing prayer, not that the church should stop engaging in it, but that it should have a theological framework for including and embracing people for whom physical healing does not happen, for whatever reason. By stressing the relational community of the church that is inclusive of

⁴² Milmon F. Harrison, *Righteous Riches: The Word of Faith Movement in Contemporary African American Religion* (Cambridge, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 148.

⁴³ Chris E Green, “The Crucified God and the Groaning Spirit: Toward a Pentecostal *Theologia Crucis* in Conversation with Jürgen Moltmann,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19, no. 1 (2010): 128.

⁴⁴ Amos Yong, “Disability and the Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecost and the Renewal of the Church,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19, no. 1 (2010): 80.

all people, even those who we might consider weaker or disabled, the church can more fully express the vision of a unified and inclusive body of Christ.⁴⁵

The hope of Pentecostal theology, with its challenges and excesses, is that it flexibly engages with the real experiences of its people across diverse spheres of life. At the same time, it has a history of Biblical engagement that “consistently exalts the authority of Scripture,”⁴⁶ which constrains this theology and calls it back to an objective foundation that corrects and refines its subjective orientation. This combination of flexibility and rootedness is a strong rubric that can bear the challenge of a broad range of issues in a variety of settings for a diversity of peoples.

Conclusion

Pentecostal theology, from the roots in Wesleyan theology to Classical Pentecostalism to its contemporary evolution in academia informs my own project in several ways. I take from these theological movements the following applications: an experiential approach, the need to retain an emphasis on sanctification and power, and a theological openness that can accept a diversity of Spiritual experience. This will help me to remain rooted and flexible in my implementation, which is concerned with Holy Spirit experience in the mainline church.

The hard, dividing lines that have been drawn between denominations continues to fade and weaken. As Protestants (both mainline and Charismatic) and Catholics alike

⁴⁵ Yong, "Disability," 88.

⁴⁶ Derek E. Vreeland, “Reconstructing Word of Faith Theology: A Defense, Analysis and Refinement of the Theology of the Word of Faith Movement” (30th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Americus, GA), 10, accessed June 13, 2017, <http://captivityofthemind.pneumafoundation.org/resources/articles/Reconstructing-DVreeland.pdf>.

wrestle with the increasing globalization and secularization in society, the different groups are more willing to come into dialogue, focusing on commonalities.⁴⁷ My own United Methodist denomination is in decline along with the other mainline churches in America. It is a time when many are looking for different ways to become spiritually vital again.

In my own local church context, we have been pursuing the person and power of the Holy Spirit over the past four years. We have employed different methods, invited different ministers and made many mistakes in trying to translate a Holy Spirit theology and practice into a mainline ethos. The difficulties with this have been numerous. Much of the difficulty has to do with the entrenched patterns and perspectives in Pentecostal and Charismatic theologies and movements which do not necessarily transfer well into a mainline church. Attempting to deploy such theologies and practices wholesale and uncritically can be more damaging than helpful and can reopen old misunderstandings and misgivings between traditions and denominations.

The Pentecostal theology that is developing today is equipping the church for a more critical, nuanced and contextualized approach to spreading an understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit. The ecumenism that is infiltrating Pentecostal theology positions it to be the way forward for making the rich understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit in that tradition accessible for mainline Christians. This is an exciting time to be in a mainline church seeking to reclaim the power of the Spirit.

⁴⁷ The Second Vatican Council is an example of this. Reginald Alva, "Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement and Secularization," *PentecoStudies* 14, no. 1 (2015): 126.

As I develop a model for imparting or facilitating Holy Spirit experience in my own context, I will be designing it to be open to and appreciative of a diversity of expressions of the Spirit in my people. Rather than forcing *glossolalia* on each person, we will attempt to recognize the real-time work of the Holy Spirit in individuals. Without rejecting tongues, we will be open for the Holy Spirit to operate in surprising, sovereign ways that include tongues but other gifts as well. We will pay attention to the experience of individuals, knowing that Pentecostal theology is strong when it emphasizes the subjective, personal encounter of each person with God. At the same time, we will remain rooted in the witness of the Scriptures that can guide and inform our experience.

I find that the danger lies in making normative for all people what is merely descriptive in the Scriptures. Or making normative for all people what we have experienced in our own personal encounters. When we focus on one particular manifestation of the Spirit, whether it be tongues, falling down under the power, healing, or any particular emotional response, we are edging closer to an imbalance that can limit the true work of the Holy Spirit and corrupt the Spirit's good work, breeding hurt and disunity rather than a joyful empowerment that readies us for mission.

The Spirit is love and mission. The Spirit is character and power. The Spirit desires for the church to be reconciled to itself and to the world. The church is local and global. The church is old, and it is new. The church finds expression in a myriad variety of structures and systems. All this is the work of the one, creative Holy Spirit. It is high time a theology of the Holy Spirit be made accessible to all who earnestly seek the reality of God in our time.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

It has been the goal of this study to find contextual methods and understandings of Holy Spirit impartation for the mainline church. As the senior pastor of a United Methodist congregation, part of a denomination that is in decline, and in a Jurisdiction that is one of the most liberal in the connection, I have found there is a gulf between the United Methodist churches I am familiar with and the Charismatic/Pentecostal move that has proliferated across the globe. The reality of my experience in the United Methodist Church has been a lack of teaching, understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit. This is ironic considering the rich heritage of Holy Spirit understanding and experience in the Wesleyan tradition, as we have seen in the historical and theological sections of this study.

It is my view that one of the keys to the revitalization of mainline churches like those in my denomination is a rediscovery and reengagement with the Holy Spirit. In terms of the United Methodist Church, our doctrine is soundly Protestant/Evangelical. Our structures are time-tested and effective at holding the denomination together in some form of organization. We have church buildings and campuses all over the world. We have highly educated and trained clergy. And yet, we continue to decline in membership and influence in society.

The Holy Spirit is the bridge between the church and the world. This was evidenced at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in power and allowed them to translate the truths of God to worldly people in their own tongues, in expressions they could understand. The Holy Spirit also empowered the apostles to heal the sick and perform signs and wonders to demonstrate the divinity of Jesus Christ and the reality of his kingdom. Lacking the Holy Spirit, or lacking a vital partnership with the Holy Spirit, the church cannot be effective in its witness for Jesus to the world; hence, the lack of growth and relevance in many mainline churches today.

I have personally been on a journey since my conversion to Jesus Christ at the age of fifteen. I committed myself to pursuing Biblical experiences for today. I believed then as I believe now that the things God's people experienced in Scripture, from the Old Testament to the New, are also available, perhaps differently contextualized, for believers to experience in every era and generation. I sought out teachers, revivalists, ministers who ministered in the power of the Spirit, books and even seminary classes that could connect me with a more Biblical Christian experience.

When I became a pastor, this pursuit did not diminish. In 2013, I felt an urgent need for my congregation to experience the Holy Spirit. I felt that something more was needed to move our congregation into greater effectiveness for the gospel of Jesus. This was when I invited the first of many ministers to lead a revival at our congregation and to minister the Holy Spirit.

There were some amazing things that happened, as I described in the first section of this document. However, there was also confusion among my congregation and many questions about what was happening. I recognized a need for a more systematic,

contextualized and in-house process for pursuing and receiving an impartation of the Holy Spirit.

I set out to devise an intervention that would enhance participants' understanding, attitude toward, and experience of the Holy Spirit. My hope was that this instrument would be useful as an ongoing program of the church in conjunction with our other programs geared toward conversions and discipleship. This tool should help believers experience the Holy Spirit, be activated in spiritual gifts and provide an experience of impartation so that congregation members could be effective both in their discipleship and in their witness to the world in Jesus' name.

What I designed is a workshop, held over two Saturday sessions, taking three hours per session. By using a combination of open discussion in response to questions; Bible Study; teaching from historical and contemporary sources about Holy Spirit experience and impartation; and waiting prayer, it was my hope that participants would find a safe and conducive space to explore, learn and experience the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This workshop would especially lend a nice contrast and complement to the more typical ways people minister the impartation of the Holy Spirit, which is in larger, more public gatherings, accompanied by expectations of certain standard manifestations of the Holy Spirit, particularly the phenomenon of being slain in the Spirit or falling out in the Spirit, which proved to be slightly confusing for some of our members, though it has also been effective in building faith for Holy Spirit experience for the most part.

I called the resulting workshop, "Life in the Spirit." If it proves to be effective in enhancing participant's attitude, understanding and experience, then I can develop it into an ongoing and regular ministry. What I found is that it was generally effective and

impactful. However, as often happens in qualitative studies, I learned things I did not expect that were extremely valuable for me to learn, and we experienced things that I did not expect as well which also proved to be encouraging.

Methodology

The basic intervention was a workshop. I had originally designed it to be six one-hour sessions but combining the first three sessions into one and doing the same with the last three sessions proved to be more effective. There were less sessions to go to, and the longer time spent in each one contributed to a greater depth of engagement. The workshop format seemed ideal because it would be reproducible as an ongoing ministry of the church. Also, my congregation tend to be commuters, meaning that many of them do not live near the church campus. By reducing the sessions to two, this would make it more likely they could attend all the sessions.

The participants came from the congregation of Kardia United Methodist Church, the church at which I am the senior pastor. Members and attenders were invited to sign up for the workshop. They had several weeks to do so, and we announced the opportunity each week. The congregation was informed that this workshop was part of a research study for the purposes of my Doctor of Ministry degree. There were no special criteria or restrictions for signing up, and so it was purely voluntary in terms of who decided to participate. I did not recruit anyone specifically for the study. My reasoning was that as much as possible I did not want to input my own bias or skew the study through selecting people for my own purposes whether because I knew their history or attitude toward Holy

Spirit experience or because they were favorable to me. While it is impossible to remove every bias, at least I would not select participants, and this would mitigate some bias.

At the beginning of the workshop, I had participants fill out consent forms that explained the nature of the study and pertinent details concerning human subject research. There were no members of any special populations. There were no youth or differently-abled participants.

Participants also filled out a pre-questionnaire. This pre-questionnaire collected demographic data about their age, ethnicity, and prior church experience. It also had three sections of questions related to their experience, beliefs and attitudes concerning the Holy Spirit. The data from this survey would help me to know the baseline disposition and experience of the group toward Holy Spirit experience. This questionnaire was in paper format, and they filled it out in the room where we had our sessions upon arriving. No names were collected on the questionnaires because I wanted participants to answer as honestly as possible.

After the study was over, I had them take the exact same questionnaire, omitting the demographic portion, as a follow-up. For the post-questionnaire, I used Google Forms and had them take it online, some weeks after the end of the last session of the workshop. I hoped to track any changes to their experience, belief and attitude regarding the Holy Spirit. If the experiences increased, if they had new experiences of the Holy Spirit, or if their beliefs and attitudes become more favorable to Holy Spirit experience, then I would have seen the intervention as possibly having positive effect.

During the two-week period over which the workshop was held, I asked participants to journal any experiences of the Holy Spirit they had. I provided them with

notepads for this purpose. They were then to turn in their journals at the end of the study. My hope was that even while participants were not in the sessions, as they went about their daily lives, there could be God-experiences that happened providentially. I had instructed them at the first session to be open to a heightened period of Holy Spirit activity in conjunction with the workshop.

Rather than doing individual interviews, the two sessions contained discussion portions that served as focus group interviews. In addition to the focus group discussions, there was also a portion where we studied passages from the Bible concerning the Holy Spirit. We also had a teaching based on the early Wesleyan movement and Holy Spirit experiences. We discussed a testimony on Holy Spirit impartation by Francis MacNutt. Finally, we read from Randy Clark's book on Holy Spirit baptism, particularly the sections on how to receive an impartation of the Holy Spirit. At the end of each of the two sessions, we spent time in waiting prayer.

The waiting prayer portions were particularly important to me to include. In past revivals and retreats centered around Holy Spirit impartation, the experience was highly directed and influenced by the speaker or teacher, and usually quite narrow in scope. There was always the primary expectation of falling out under the power of the Spirit. The waiting prayer portion of the workshop would be minimally directed and leave room for manifestations of the Holy Spirit without the pressurized and public scenario of standing in a prayer line knowing the expectation was to fall out under the power.

The reason I did not choose to do individual interviews, especially following the study, was due to the richness of the discussion during the focus groups. I had quite a bit of data by the end of the workshops. The participants were forthcoming and engaged in

the discussion. It was also my judgment that the most engaged participants, the ones I would have selected for individual interviews, had already shared enough salient input to make individual interviews likely redundant.

I had three of my peer associates participate from the periphery of the discussion during the workshop sessions. Two were actively taking notes during the session. One was also a full participant in the workshop. I relied on their notes and observations to add to, correct or confirm my own notes and observations of the sessions. They also helped steer the discussion times according to their judgment, which was helpful.

Between the questionnaires, journals, peer associates, and the focus group discussions, I anticipated having enough data to validate and triangulate any findings. By balancing the structured portions based on Biblical and historical teaching with the more open-ended discussion sections, I believe there was a good chance to stimulate engaging discussion while also leaving room for the participants to self-direct the discussion.

Finally, I record the audio of both sessions of the workshop, capturing six hours of focus group discussion and teaching. My peer associate helped me with the transcription of the audio. We transcribed roughly 35,000 words of interviews and discussion.

Implementation

The core of my implementation was a two-day workshop consisting of six main components. I covered three of these the first session, and three the second session. Each session ended with a time of waiting prayer where participants were in a posture of being

open and sensitive to anything the Holy Spirit was doing or wanted to do. We met on January 20 and February 3, two Saturdays with two weeks in between sessions.

While I had initially anticipated presenting this project to the congregation as a Bible study, I decided to offer it in the format of a workshop instead. My reason for wanting to do a Bible study was that it is a familiar small group meeting format for those accustomed to a mainline church setting. This contrasts with other formats such as revival meetings, prayer services, or ministry times of impartation, which may carry expectations of emotionalism and what some might characterize as overly emotional behavior. A Bible study is comparatively familiar and safe. However, a workshop is just as familiar to a mainline audience, while being more flexible in its implementation and providing opportunity for practical application of what participants would learn or discuss.

Description of Workshop Session One

Participants gathered on a Saturday morning in a comfortable, lounge-like meeting space on our church campus. They sat on sofas and chairs around a central coffee table. It was a living room-type atmosphere. This was to establish a level of comfort that would encourage free conversation. Coffee and light breakfast items were provided by one of my context associates to make sure hunger did not negatively impact the session. The session began at 9:00 a.m. Before the official start of the workshop, participants filled out a pre-questionnaire that took stock of their demographic data, their Holy Spirit experience, beliefs and attitudes. The questionnaires did not ask for names, as the data would be compiled and analyzed in aggregate. Ten total participants had signed up, one of which was also a peer associate. I had two other peer associates join the

sessions in addition to the ten official participants to take notes, observe, and to provide their own input into the direction of the discussions. Finally, I acted as the workshop leader for both sessions.

We began the workshop by sharing past spiritual experiences. Participants were asked what impactful experiences of God they had had in the past. They shared freely and were able to respond and interact with one another in a discussion format. This portion was one of the focus group interview segments.

Following a short break, we had a short Bible study. It was not an in-depth study into one passage, but a reading of five passages with a brief time of reflection and response on how the passage spoke on Holy Spirit experience after each passage. The Bible passages we read were: Acts 1:4-8, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 2:38-39, Romans 8:9-17, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

Next came a teaching on Holy Spirit experience during the early Methodist revival. We covered Charles Wesley's conversion experience, including Mrs. Musgrave's role, Charles' supernatural healing from his death bed and ensuing conversion to faith. We also talked about the Fetter Lane Pentecost and Holy Spirit manifestations during John Wesley's preaching and ministry.

Throughout the Bible study and teaching time, there was opportunity for questions from the participants which steered the discussion to some interesting topics. Participants asked questions on the topics of baptism about salvation, predestination, and Pentecostalism. So even during the teaching times where it was more structured and guided, the discussion still had elements of a focus group interview, and valuable data came out during these times.

At the end of session one, we had a time of waiting prayer. I explicitly instructed that we were not looking for any particular experience or manifestation of the Holy Spirit. I did ask participants to be sensitive to anything the Holy Spirit might be doing and to describe their experience during the waiting prayer. One person described a warmth on her head. She later began to sob quietly. Another woman said she felt tingling in her arms. A third woman described feeling heat in her hands. After waiting further in prayer, we ended the session at 12:00 p.m.

In the interim two weeks between the first and second sessions of the workshop, I asked participants to keep a journal of any spiritual experiences they had that were significant to them. I provided notepads for them to record their entries. I would collect these journals at the next session. Because I stressed that the study they were involved in was completely voluntary, not everyone kept the journal. The journals described a deep wrestling with temptation, a desire for sanctification, as well as several providential moments where participants experienced God's activity in their lives.

Description of Workshop Session Two

We met February 3, Saturday morning at 9:00 AM for the second and final session. We had all but one person come back for the second session. The missing participant had a work obligation that prevented him from returning. We met in the same room and provided a light breakfast again.

To begin the second session, we had a discussion to debrief the prior session and the intervening two weeks. One participant remarked concerning the waiting prayer time to conclude the prior session, "I loved how you were talking about holy tears and how

that's like even more evidence of the Holy Spirit, and then Mary (not real name) starts crying Holy tears during the prayer! That was so cool!” The fact that some people had a tangible spiritual experience during that waiting prayer time was confirmed and affirmed by the group.

We then moved on to questions about their Holy Spirit experience from the interim two weeks. One person sought out a Charismatic prayer gathering with a House of Prayer in Pasadena, CA. That person testified to receiving prophetic prayer that accurately and specifically addressed a personal concern. Two others described feeling conviction of sin, repentance, and a desire for greater holiness and freedom from sin. Another participant described experiencing immediate relief from a severe cough that was preventing sleep after she laid hands on herself and prayed for healing. Another person described seeking and receiving specific guidance from God about a large purchase. The purpose of recording these events is not to establish any causal relationship between the workshop and those events. However, it is encouraging to see as a researcher that these kinds of things are happening to people in the congregation.

We moved on to discuss a testimony that I had printed out and given to the group in the previous meeting. The testimony was from Francis MacNutt, a Catholic priest who became a Charismatic Christian.¹ This testimony was particularly applicable to my congregation because MacNutt had no experience or familiarity with Charismatic or Pentecostal expressions of Christianity. For the most part, this reflected the group's experience.

¹ Francis MacNutt, “My Search for the Spirit,” Christian Healing Ministries, Spring 2014, https://www.christianhealingmin.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=626:my-search-for-the-spirit&catid=209:hl-articles-2014-1&Itemid=458.

The next teaching was from Randy Clark's book on Holy Spirit baptism.² We discussed his recommendations on how to receive the Holy Spirit. Seeing how other Christian traditions have regarded the process of receiving a baptism of the Holy Spirit served as a reference point for the group's practical approaches to the phenomenon. The group spent some time reflecting on where each of them stood with regard to the steps and suggestions. I presented this teaching to gauge the group's attitude toward receiving a baptism of the Holy Spirit themselves.

There was a moment following the teaching where one of the members provided a testimony about experiencing a powerful impartation through the ministry of one of my context associates, a woman who was present in the room at the time and observing the discussion. This prompted me to share a testimony where I experienced an impartation through this same person's ministry, which prompted yet another person to share a similar testimony. The atmosphere of spiritual intensity began to shift at this point.

Finally, when going over the necessity of surrender to Jesus Christ, one of the participants shared powerfully about his willingness to surrender everything for God. This moved us into an intense time of waiting prayer. There were some manifestations of the Holy Spirit such as weeping, but even more significant was a prophetic release that broke open in the group. This moment culminated in prayer for each participant with the laying on of hands, and prophetic prayers were spoken over each person.

² Randy Clark, *Baptized in the Spirit: God's Presence Resting Upon You with Power* (Destiny Image, 2017), 108, 116.

Post-Questionnaire

The final component to the study was the post-questionnaire. This was delivered as an online survey that participants received an invitation to via email. The reason for delivering the post-questionnaire in a different medium than the pre-questionnaire was not intentional. This became necessary because of the spontaneous way we ended the second session, with prophetic prayer. Participants left at different times and we did not remind them to take the survey. We adjusted by send the survey online.

Summary of Learning

My hypothesis was that there needed to be a more contextualized process for Holy Spirit ministry in a mainline church, one that used small group discussions with instruction. This was in response to the process my congregation, Kardia United Methodist Church, had gone through since 2013. I felt a conviction that we needed a greater impartation of the Holy Spirit in my church, and so we invited guest speakers who moved in Charismatic/Pentecostal modes to minister to us. This coincided with a multi-year decline in church attendance as many of the mainline evangelical Christians who had been a part of the congregation grew uncomfortable with the different ministry focus. I suspected that the process I had implemented at that time did not consider the discomfort level of evangelical Christians with Charismatic/Pentecostal methods.

Using a workshop format with discussion is an approach that I implemented for the purposes of this study. I hoped to see positive changes in terms of a more favorable attitude toward Holy Spirit ministry, positive beliefs concerning the Holy Spirit, and an increase in Charismatic/Pentecostal experience through the workshop. I believe that the

intervention provided valuable learning about the process of transitioning a mainline evangelical church into a greater awareness and experience of the work of the Holy Spirit, which should make the church more effective and vital in its ministries.

The greatest benefit of the study, however, was not the change in the participants, but the refinement in my understanding of the process we had gone through, what had been effective and what had been less effective. I learned that some things that I had dismissed were actually more impactful than I had thought. I also learned that the people who remained throughout the process were much more receptive to Holy Spirit experience, and even eager for it, than I had anticipated. I will reflect more on this after examining some of the other data.

Demographics of Participants

The number of participants in the Life in the Spirit workshop was ten. I provided the pre-questionnaire at the beginning of the first session and so was able to get 100% response rate. The first section of the pre-questionnaire was demographic in nature.

There was an even distribution of ages across the forties and fifties, with one outlying young adult. This means that the participant group consisted of people in their middle-age, which means that they likely had a good deal of church experience. These were not new Christians, so they likely had the chance to learn more about the church and theology, including teaching about the Holy Spirit.

Age of Participants

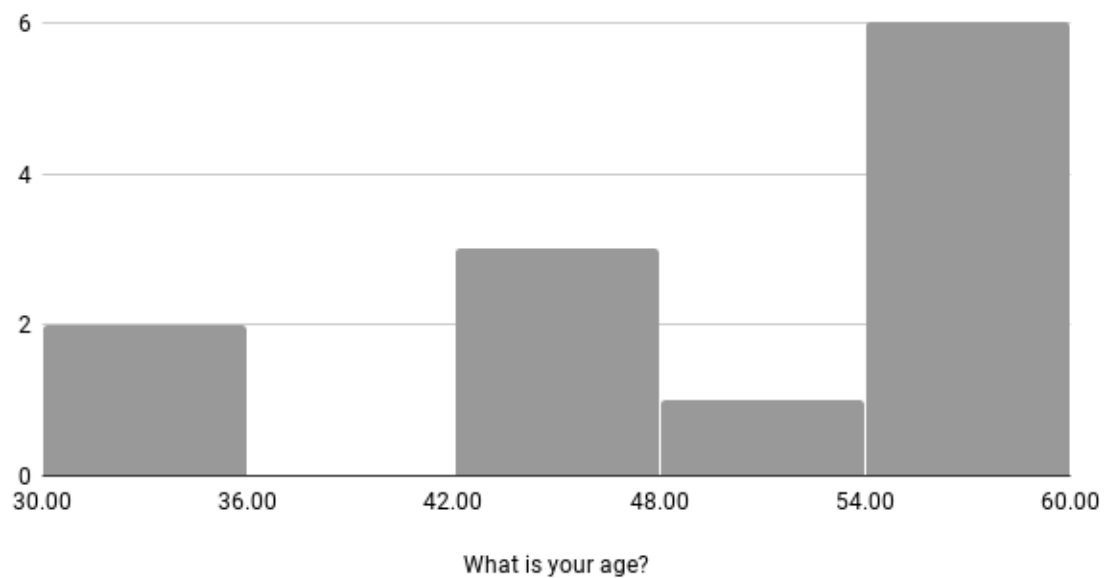


Figure 1. Age of Participants

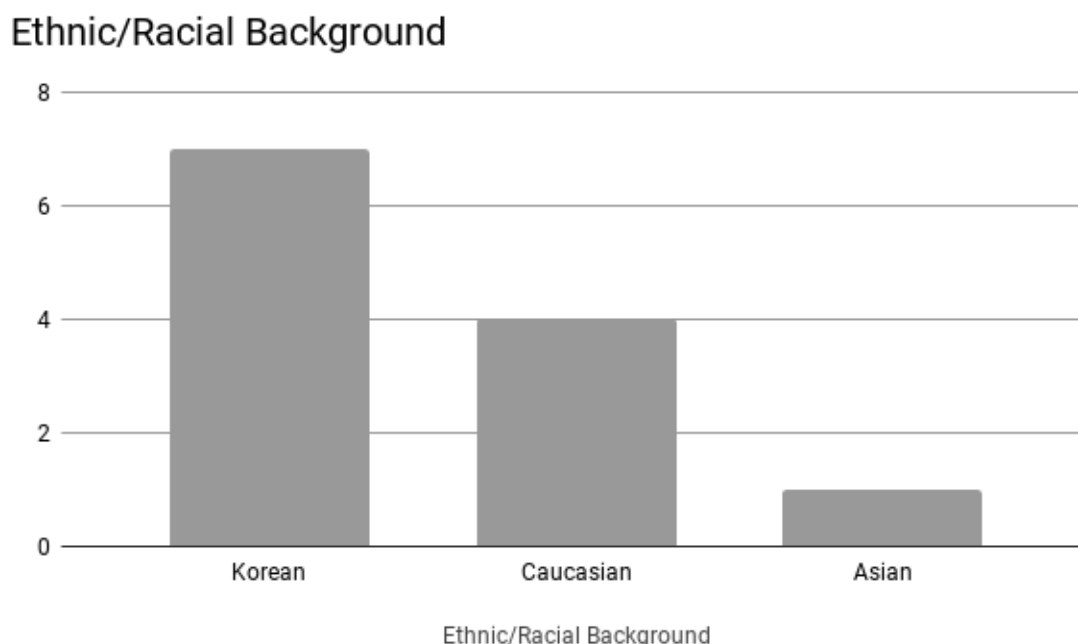


Figure 2. Ethnic/Racial Background

Figure 2 shows the racial demographics of the group. It was primarily Asian, specifically Korean-American. Twenty percent of the group was non-Asian, of Caucasian race. This could be significant in interpreting the data because in my experience, Korean Christian churches tend to be more open to Charismatic spirituality, regardless of denomination. The outcomes may be quite different in a congregation of other predominant ethnicity. The balancing factor is that the Korean-Americans in this congregation are quite assimilated into Western culture.

The gender makeup of the group was split evenly with 50% being male and 50% being female. This was not an intentional outcome. The sign-up process for the workshop was open to the entire congregation, and each participant volunteered to take part. I did not deny anyone who wanted to be a part of the workshop participation, but we accepted all interested persons into the group.

All the participants were current members or attenders of Kardia United Methodist Church. Before they became a part of Kardia, the participants had a variety of other church experiences. What is notable is the fluidity of denominational choices among the group. Participants seem to be able to move from Presbyterian to Methodist, or from non-denominational to mainline churches. However, this fluidity did not mean their denominational experience was irrelevant. The theological traditions they were raised in were evident in the focus group discussions. Particularly, the tension between a reformed theology of salvation and a Wesleyan emphasis on sanctification surfaced.

Table 1. Prior Church Experience

Participant	Prior Churches Attended
1	Methodist, Presbyterian
2	Methodist
3	Korean Presbyterian, Non-denominational Korean
4	Non-denominational
5	Methodist
6	Non-denominational
7	Korean Presbyterian,
8	Presbyterian, Methodist
9	Evangelical Free
10	Methodist

However, this past church experience was quite far in the past for most of the participants. Eight out of the ten respondents had been a part of the current congregation

for more than ten years in its various locations and iterations. Only two participants had joined the church within the past five years.

This demographic data allows us to understand the kind of spirituality that participants brought with them into the study. They are mostly evangelical, and mostly mainline, and with a hint of a Reformed theological influence in some cases. They have as a background an Asian-American spirituality, particularly Korean, which may tend to have exposed them to more Charismatic/Pentecostal experiences since first generation Korean-American Christians have a heritage of more Charismatic expression with practices such as morning prayer and tongue-speaking. Finally, they are seasoned Christians rather than new Christians.

Analysis of Pre-Questionnaire and Post-Questionnaire

The response rate was 100% for the pre-questionnaire while the response rate for the post-questionnaire was 60%. This disparity came about because we administered the pre-questionnaire at the beginning of the first session, while we offered the post-questionnaire online after the sessions. The circumstances of how the second session ended, being a spontaneous prophetic ministry time, made it so we did not end with a time of formal debriefing and survey taking. People left at different times as they received ministry. The data from this source would have been more useful had we administered the questionnaires in both sessions.

The pre and post questionnaires dealt with three areas: experiences, attitudes and beliefs with regard to Charismatic/Pentecostal spirituality. The pre-questionnaires revealed the beliefs, experiences and attitudes that they were bringing in with them to the

study. The post-questionnaires reveal if there were any significant changes in those three areas. Positive changes would indicate that the Life in the Spirit workshop may have enhanced participant's beliefs, attitude and experience of the Holy Spirit. I will now look at each of the three areas in turn.

Measuring Holy Spirit Experience

The experience section of the questionnaires had participants select from a checklist of twenty-two examples of Holy Spirit experience, with the addition of an "other" selection in case they had an experience not represented by the list. The experiences chosen were those I had found to be common in both Evangelical and Charismatic traditions, but which I believe to be attributable to the activity of the Holy Spirit. I included experiences that might be more conventionally Christian, such as, "As I was reading the Bible, I felt that specific words or verses were speaking directly to me," to events more peculiar to Pentecostal or revival experiences, such as "I have experienced falling down or collapsing involuntarily due to the power of God when someone prayed for me." This list of experiences was not comprehensive, nor could any such list practically be, in my estimation. To test for the comprehensiveness of the list, I included an additional option of "other," so that respondents could include any experiences that I did not mention. None of the respondents checked this option.

Overall, I attempted to capture a variety of experiences to test for evidence of the Holy Spirit's indwelling and active work in a participant's life. There were options for physical and visible experiences, whether falling in the Spirit or being supernaturally healed. There were also options for more internal, subjective experiences, such as

emotional experiences, supernatural boldness or inner conviction. There were also questions to gauge whether participants demonstrated evidence of saving faith in Jesus Christ, such as conviction about sin, a sense of forgiveness for sin, and an experience of the love of God. This could help distinguish between those who had a “born-again” experience of faith and those who might have grown up in the church but had not had such an experience. Admittedly, this comes from my own convictions about truly saving faith as having a personal, experiential component that other Christians might not agree with, but for the purpose of pursuing Holy Spirit experience, it seemed helpful to me to know whether participants had a born-again experience or not. Still, it is worth pointing out that just because a person has not had the experiences in this survey, this does not mean they are not a genuine believer in Jesus Christ. Ultimately, only God can make that determination.

Looking at the pre-questionnaire data in Table 2, a picture emerges of the group as having more of a typical Evangelical experience of the Holy Spirit in the past. The highest “yes” responses were about more internal, emotional spiritual experiences. Less common were more physical or outward spiritual experiences.

Table 2. Pre-Questionnaire Holy Spirit Experience (out of ten responses)

#	Experience Description	% Yes
1	As I was reading the Bible, I felt that specific words or verses were speaking directly to me.	90%
2	I have had a spiritual experience that was so overwhelming that I wept or cried involuntarily.	70%
3	I have experienced falling down or collapsing involuntarily due to the power of God when someone prayed for me.	30%
4	I have experienced falling down or collapsing involuntarily due to the power of God without anyone touching me or praying for me.	0%
5	I have heard God speaking to me audibly.	0%
6	I have spoken in an earthly language that I had not previously learned.	20%

7	In prayer, I have spoken in a language or uttered words that did not seem like an earthly language.	20%
8	I have spoken to people about God where it felt like God was speaking through me.	50%
9	I have felt a deep conviction about my own sin.	90%
10	I have felt God's love for me in a very real and powerful way.	70%
11	I have experienced a deep sense of being forgiven by God.	50%
12	I have been able to speak about Jesus Christ to others with a courage that surprised me.	70%
13	I have had an experience where I groaned or made other sounds during a church gathering and I could not help it.	10%
14	I have had an experience of the power of God where I could not move.	0%
15	I have felt God in such a way that it felt like a weight physically pressing down on me.	20%
16	I have felt a compassion for other people that seemed to come from God rather than myself.	70%
17	I have been in a worship setting where it felt as if God was really there.	80%
18	I have experienced freedom through God from a persistent sin or sinful attitude.	70%
19	After becoming a Christian, I have changed in my character to have more of any of the following qualities: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.	90%
20	I have been healed supernaturally through Jesus' name	30%
21	After becoming a Christian, I received an ability related to ministry that I did not have before.	30%
22	I have encountered a demonic spirit that left me when I commanded it in Jesus' name.	20%
23	Other	0%

A significant finding also is that 30% of participants had experienced supernatural healing in the past. Healing would be a major factor in one of the participants coming to faith in Jesus Christ. One person corroborated this in the focus group discussion when he shared,

“My brothers weren’t really believers, but we saw our brother get healed. It’s one of those things that’s supernatural so that’s the thing that impacted myself and my two older brothers and I think one of reason why we are believers.”

This was a surprising and recurring theme in the focus group time. People had more faith for physical healing than I had anticipated. During the time period of the study, two of the

participants reported experiencing immediate and instantaneous healing when they prayed for themselves. Another reported instantaneous healing upon being prayed for by another person who had received a prophetic revelation to pray for that person's healing.

Table 3. Post-Questionnaire Holy Spirit Experience (out of six responses)

#	Experience Description	% Yes
1	As I was reading the Bible, I felt that specific words or verses were speaking directly to me.	100%
2	I have had a spiritual experience that was so overwhelming that I wept or cried involuntarily.	67%
3	I have experienced falling down or collapsing involuntarily due to the power of God when someone prayed for me.	50%
4	I have experienced falling down or collapsing involuntarily due to the power of God without anyone touching me or praying for me.	0%
5	I have heard God speaking to me audibly.	17%
6	I have spoken in an earthly language that I had not previously learned.	33%
7	In prayer, I have spoken in a language or uttered words that did not seem like an earthly language.	17%
8	I have spoken to people about God where it felt like God was speaking through me.	33%
9	I have felt a deep conviction about my own sin.	83%
10	I have felt God's love for me in a very real and powerful way.	67%
11	I have experienced a deep sense of being forgiven by God.	67%
12	I have been able to speak about Jesus Christ to others with a courage that surprised me.	50%
13	I have had an experience where I groaned or made other sounds during a church gathering and I could not help it.	0%
14	I have had an experience of the power of God where I could not move.	33%
15	I have felt God in such a way that it felt like a weight physically pressing down on me.	17%
16	I have felt a compassion for other people that seemed to come from God rather than myself.	67%
17	I have been in a worship setting where it felt as if God was really there.	83%
18	I have experienced freedom through God from a persistent sin or sinful attitude.	50%
19	After becoming a Christian, I have changed in my character to have more of any of the following qualities: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.	83%
20	I have been healed supernaturally through Jesus' name	50%
21	After becoming a Christian, I received an ability related to ministry that I did not have before.	50%

22	I have encountered a demonic spirit that left me when I commanded it in Jesus' name.	33%
23	Other	0%

There were some changes between the pre and post questionnaires regarding Holy Spirit experiences. Question five, "I have heard God speaking to me audibly," had no responses in the pre-questionnaire, but had one response in the post-questionnaire. This is an example of a very unusual, even supernatural type of experience.

Question fourteen, "I have had an experience of the power of God where I could not move," had zero responses in the pre-questionnaire, but in the post, there were two people who indicated they had experienced this. This would suggest that they experienced this phenomenon in the time between questionnaires. This would be significant for this group as this is a physical, non-subjective manifestation.

The other descriptions were fairly in line for both pre and post questionnaires, suggesting no significant change. This is difficult to determine because of the disparity in response rates. The conclusion is that there was mostly no change to spiritual experience except for the above-mentioned changes. However, those outlying changes are notable.

Measuring Beliefs

The one notable thing about this section of the questionnaires was the answer to the question, "What does the Holy Spirit do for/in Christians?" In the pre-questionnaire, 8 out of 10 participants had some form of the function, "guide," in their understanding of the Holy Spirit. Only 2 participants responded with some form of the concept that the Holy Spirit "empowers" Christians.

In the post-questionnaire for the same question, out of 6 respondents, only 1 person viewed the work of the Holy Spirit as “empowerment.” Similarly, in the pre-questionnaire, 5 out of the 6 viewed the Spirit as “guide.” This demonstrates no change in belief in the Holy Spirit as “empowerment.” This is not surprising as I did not emphasize this aspect during the workshop. This may be an area to teach into in the future, as I believe it is a critical distinction between more evangelical/traditional understandings of the Holy Spirit and a more Pentecostal/Charismatic understanding. It is important for Christians to begin to understand the work of the Holy Spirit as empowerment for mission to the world and to one another if we are to see greater effectiveness in churches.

Measuring Attitudes

The outstanding finding in terms of this group of participants was the unanimity in total openness to the Holy Spirit. On a scale of one to ten, I had participants measure their openness to the Holy Spirit. In both the pre and post tests, 100% of participants chose ten. This was surprising to me, even though the participants self-selected themselves for a workshop on the Holy Spirit. Giving them a scale of ten to gauge their openness to the Holy Spirit set me up to predict more variety and less openness than I was seeing. After the workshop, this openness did not diminish, and so the data would indicate that the workshop did not have a negative impact on participants’ openness.

The other significant outcome in terms of the pre and post questionnaires was a change in anxiety about Holy Spirit experience. While there was a great deal of openness to Holy Spirit experience from the beginning, there was also a significant level of anxiety accompanying that openness. Though I did not measure the specific nature of the anxiety,

it may have roots in either past negative experiences of Holy Spirit ministry or speculation about things that may happen that participants would feel uncomfortable with.

Regardless, the pre-test shows that most participants had a self-scored anxiety level above 5. This would indicate that most of the group was significantly anxious about what might happen in the workshop. The post-test, meanwhile, shows that roughly 83% of participants had anxiety scores of 5 and lower. Considering that only 6 out of 10 participants responded to the invitation to take the post-test, even if all those who did not respond would have indicated a high anxiety level, there would still have been a total anxiety level lower than in the pre-test. This would suggest that the Life in the Spirit workshop had the effect of mitigating participant's anxiety about Holy Spirit experience.

I feel anxious about experiencing the Holy Spirit

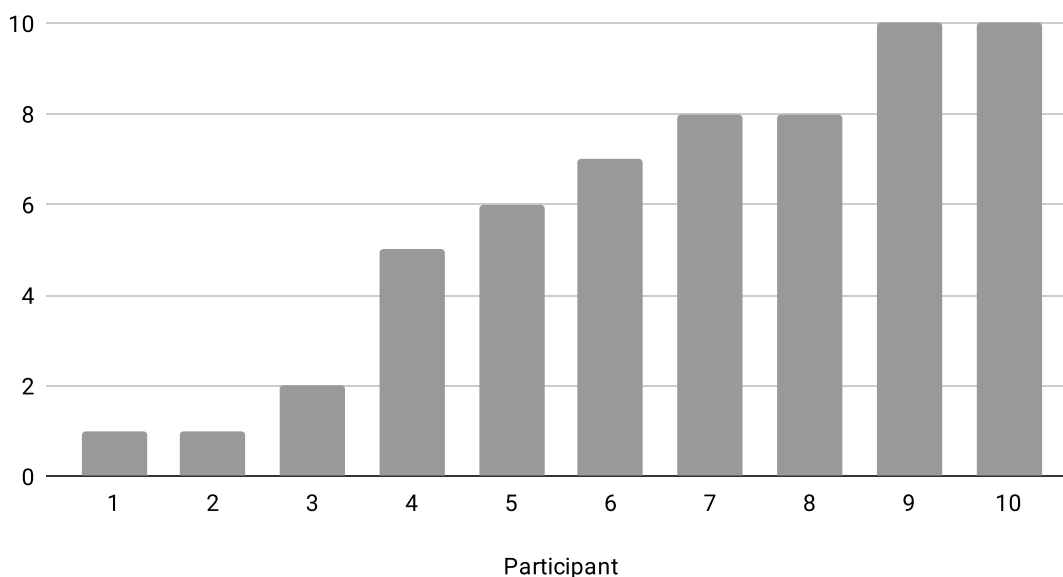


Figure 3. Pre-Questionnaire Anxiety Levels

I feel anxious about experiencing the Holy Spirit

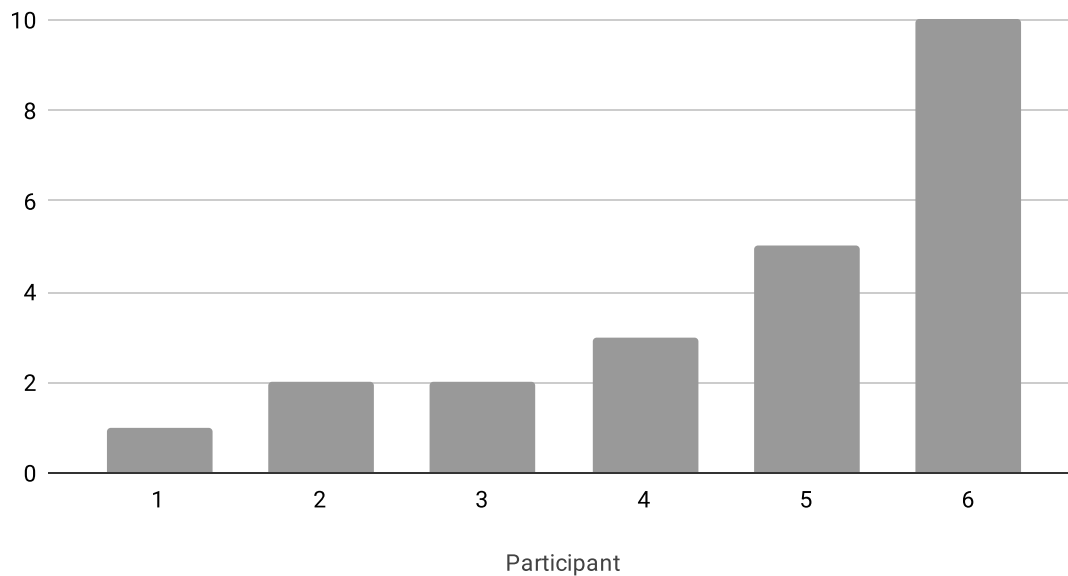


Figure 4. Post-Questionnaire Anxiety Levels

The Effectiveness of Past Efforts in Holy Spirit Ministry

One of the genuinely shocking revelations in the focus group discussion was when one participant stated, “I count 36 years that I have been a part of this church in 3 different campuses and in that 36 years, I hadn’t had a single pastor until you arrived talk and preach about the Holy Spirit.” While this mirrors my own experience in the United Methodist Church, it is still a reality that perhaps those who run in Charismatic/Pentecostal circles do not fully appreciate. There are Christians who have been in church their entire lives and their experience may very well be like this participant’s, that they have never had any meaningful teaching or preaching on the Holy Spirit. This made me wonder if the lack of awareness and interest in the Holy Spirit

among evangelical mainline Christians is not due necessarily to hostility but to lack of exposure.

This may be true even in larger, growing churches that are evangelical mainline. The participant just quoted also said, “I used to go to Redeemer Presbyterian in New York when I was living there, and the preacher there, Tim Keller, phenomenal preacher! I never recalled him preaching once on the Holy Spirit.” Being from a Reformed tradition, it is possible that Tim Keller may not be open to Charismatic/Pentecostal expressions of the Holy Spirit.

There were others who indicated that it was after I began to teach and preach on the Holy Spirit in 2013 that they became exposed and open to the Spirit. This highlights the importance of pastoral initiative and buy-in for transitioning a church into the things of the Spirit. Being such a controversial topic for mainline Christians, if the pastor is not open to the things of the Spirit, there could not be much of a move into these things.

What was also significant in helping church members who were previously unfamiliar with Charismatic/Pentecostal Christianity embrace experiences and practices new to them were the numerous speakers we had who came and taught in our revivals and retreats. All the speakers we brought in were associated with Third Wave Charismatic Christianity. They had a good balance of Biblical teaching, a measured and reasonable approach to supernatural elements in Holy Spirit ministry, and powerful personal testimonies of Holy Spirit experience. This can be a highly effective element in transitioning a church into Holy Spirit ministry.

In response to the question, “Did anybody else go through a shift in their view of the Holy Spirit or their understanding of the Holy Spirit?”, during the second focus group

discussion, one participant referred to the guest speakers we had invited over the course of five years.

It's all through your speakers and I've absolutely believed every single guest speaker that we've had, even if it sounds a little out there or it never occurred before, like about casting out demons. You had a workshop about that, what to look for, even, I mean, all of it, because it seems Biblically sound if you're studying the Bible. And so, yeah, I don't doubt any of it, no matter how strange it sounds, because it's rooted in the Word. It's consistent with the Word and it seems to be true. So definitely, all our speakers.

For this participant, the guest speakers were trustworthy because they had a Biblical basis for their teaching. This would be important to keep in mind when introducing Holy Spirit ministry in a mainline Evangelical setting.

All this might seem to indicate that mainline Evangelicals are ready for a move of the Holy Spirit. It takes teaching, particularly by the pastor. But I imagine more interaction between mainline churches and Charismatic/Pentecostal churches and speakers would be beneficial. If the Charismatic speakers can offer their own experiences of the Holy Spirit and back it up with Biblical support, they would find a ready audience in churches that may previously have had no exposure to Holy Spirit teaching or ministry.

One final highlight of the church's past efforts in terms of Holy Spirit ministry centered around one of my context associates. This context associate had experienced a revelation in 2013 that brought her providentially to our congregation. She is a prophetic person. During the second workshop session, we were discussing the Catholic priest, Francis MacNutt's testimony of how he received an activation of the Holy Spirit, and how it took someone who knew how to pray for him to make that happen. One of the group participants gave this testimony,

Well, thinking how to do it the right way the first time I was slain by the Holy Spirit, after praying so many years, as I'm getting older and older, so many years wanting to encounter the Holy Spirit, it took a Black woman that I didn't really know very well. I'm so proud of myself that she did this thing to me. She put on this shawl. And I clearly was saying to myself, "This ain't going to work. This is not going to happen," and the next thing...bang! I was crying. You saw me, right there in this sanctuary.

My context associate has a gift and an impartation for activating people in the Holy Spirit. I myself had two very significant Holy Spirit encounters, clearly supernatural and one of them physical, through the ministry of this woman of God. So perhaps one takeaway is, when God wants to begin activating your congregation in the Holy Spirit, he will send someone to you who can be an instrument of that activation. What we need to do as a church is figure out how to leverage her ministry for the congregation.

Physical Manifestations During Waiting Prayer

During the first workshop session, we ended with a time of waiting prayer. While we were sitting together in silence, I asked the group to be mindful of anything they were experiencing or feeling, and I invited them to share anything they noticed. One participant immediately said, "I felt like somebody touching my head. Starting to get warm." Immediately following, another participant said, "Tingling in the arms." I then prayed for the first participant, the one who felt someone touching her head. I prayed, "increase the anointing on [participant's] head, God." This person began to audibly weep right away. I also prayed for the person with tingling in the arms, and I had the impression to pray that God would activate gifts of healing in this person through the laying on of hands. A third participant then said, "My hand's getting warmer when we pray like this."

For an evangelical mainline church like ours with a very rational and worldly-wise membership, these kinds of physical manifestations may seem surprising. They were surprising to me in that I was not sure what to expect during the waiting prayer time. I just know that I wanted the group to experience the Holy Spirit in their own way, without specific prompting, and I had an expectation that the Holy Spirit would do something. I believe when we give the Holy Spirit the invitation and the opportunity to manifest in a group of believers, he will do so according to his discretion, and it may surprise people.

Sanctification as a Major Purpose of Holy Spirit Ministry

One interesting motivation for the group to pursue the Holy Spirit was sanctification above power gifts. Perhaps this is something that ties in with our Wesleyan roots as Methodists. One participant asked the group,

I'm curious to know, maybe some other people, why do you want to get in touch with the Holy Spirit? Why do you want to live a life that's guided by the Spirit? And the more I think about it, the answer for me is: I want freedom from this world.

This sense of being set apart and separate from the world is the essence of holiness, and a truly Wesleyan value. This was echoed by a different participant who said,

Well, I'm going through the discipleship training and a big part of this chapter was around the Holy Spirit. Who the Holy Spirit is and building the foundation. What I took out of that experience was that a lot of things that needed change, sins in my life...It's just character building and I need the Holy Spirit to help me get me through those moments, especially at work.

I believe this to be an important work of the Holy Spirit that we may be overlooking. We are focused on power gifts in Charismatic/Pentecostal circles. But the sanctification work of the Spirit is just as important and needed, particularly for people in mainline

evangelical traditions who may not be ready to go out and do power evangelism while they are struggling with temptations and spiritual defeat in their personal walk with Christ.

Prophecy

It is my conviction looking at the Holy Spirit baptisms in the Biblical book of Acts that the primary expression of the Spirit is to empower Christians to witness to the world concerning Jesus Christ. So, the work is primarily a communicative work. This would explain the manifestation of tongues at Pentecost and the Apostle Paul's giving the gift of prophecy pride of place in terms of spiritual gifts. This prioritization of prophecy and communication was evident in our second workshop session.

The way the discussion was going, there was such a depth of testimony and sharing that the atmosphere in the room was quite heavy with the power of the Holy Spirit. There was an elevated level of faith in the room. One person had testified to his willingness to surrender his life to whatever Jesus wanted to do. My prophetic context associate invited the group to do whatever the Holy Spirit prompted them to do. Immediately, one participant said, "I don't get this kind of feeling, but I just want to say, in the name of Jesus be healed, that's all," and she laid her hand on the person sitting next to her. This was a prophetic utterance and action, and something I had not seen this member do before. I believe it was an activation of the Holy Spirit for prophecy, and my context associate confirmed this.

There were other prophetic events during this time of heightened faith. One of my context associates received words for each participant. Another participant prayed for

healing of a loved one. Another got an impression for someone else in the room. All this culminated in a powerful time of laying on of hands and prayer over each participant. I believe that beyond being slain in the Spirit or having interesting, supernatural encounters of the Holy Spirit, this prophetic release, the ability to speak forth the mind and heart of God, is what the Holy Spirit wants to activate in believers today, because I believe this is something the world needs more than anything else, to hear and know God's heart and mind.

Conclusion

In view of the feedback and data that I gleaned from the workshop and from other sources, it would be fair to say that it was effective in enhancing participant's attitude toward the Holy Spirit, and it was useful for providing concrete experiences of the Holy Spirit. Less clear is how the workshop shaped the participant's beliefs about the Holy Spirit. This may be beyond the scope of such a workshop, as participants are sometimes bringing with them a great deal of foundational theology about the Spirit that would be difficult to change.

More than the effectiveness of the implementation, however, was the value of the entire project for my own understanding of the congregation and the journey of transitioning into a Spirit-filled church that we had been on for the past number of years. It was fascinating and encouraging to see the fruit of labor that we had put in years before, much of the time without knowing if there would be any fruit. Efforts that I had thought were not very effective turned out to be very effective in producing faith for Holy Spirit ministry in some of my congregation members. I believe this translates into a

greater understanding of how such transitions can happen in mainline evangelical churches in general.

There is hunger and hope in mainline evangelical churches for a greater experience of the Holy Spirit. While there will be fallout in transitioning a church into more Charismatic/Pentecostal experiences, there will also be openness and readiness for it. We should not be deterred because some do not feel comfortable with such a transition. The transition is necessary if we are to see greater fruitfulness, effectiveness and power in ministering to a culture that is increasingly secular and unchurched. There must be tangible experiences and demonstrations of the power of God. Doctrine and liturgy are not enough.

Churches that want to transition should keep in mind some best practices as far as I can glean from the case study of my own congregation.

1. Do not underestimate the value of bringing in trustworthy outside speakers and ministers who move in the Spirit. Their experience and testimonies can be powerful change agents.
2. The pastor should initiate the transition. Pastoral belief and support for the direction of moving in the things of the Spirit are necessary to legitimize the transition and to reassure the congregation when things become uncomfortable.
3. Grounding the teaching in Scripture is valuable for Evangelicals. It will be difficult for them to deny the workings of the Holy Spirit when they see the Biblical precedents and mandates for them.

4. Providing a workshop format where there can be a mix of discussion, teaching and practice can be effective in beginning to explore the work of the Holy Spirit in a contextualized, indigenous way.
5. Affirming the spiritual experiences of the congregation that they have already had can build faith for fresh experiences and new endeavors.
6. The people in the congregation that persist in the transition to Holy Spirit ministry are spiritually hungry. They may be more willing to pursue this direction than you give them credit for. Things like speaking in tongues, miraculous healing, and prophetic ministry are within their reach.

As a pastor that is continuing to transition a congregation into fruitful, Spirit-filled ministry to one another and to the world, I was greatly encouraged by the workshop, and the feedback I received encouraged me to continue my efforts.

One of the things that was striking to me was that I had really underestimated the spiritual hunger in my congregation. This church tends to have more rational, highly educated, and worldly-wise members. They are good people who are not loud or pushy about things they would like to experience in church. This relative reservedness was something I may have misread as indifference or skepticism. It was helpful to hear that the efforts we made in the pursuit of the Holy Spirit had more of an impact than I had realized.

Considerations for Future Study

One of the missing pieces in this study are the missing people. I did not have the opportunity to interview or study those members of the congregation who left the church

during the spiritual transition. This would be a valuable addition to the data. What elements of our pursuit of the Holy Spirit were particularly offensive or unpalatable? Is there anything we could have done differently? Is it the case that a church that wants to reclaim Holy Spirit experience must be willing to lose a significant portion of their membership? These are questions that this present study did not answer. What I did find out was that what we did was meaningful for the people who stayed.

If I were to deploy the Life in the Spirit workshop model in a different congregation or denomination, or even if I were to do it again in my own congregation, these are some things I would do differently.

1. I would prepare more of a presentation format for the teaching rather than discussion. I think there is an information and experience gap between most mainline Christians' and Charismatic traditions that is quite significant and needs to be bridged. Discussion alone cannot bridge this gap. Having a presentation with slides and a bit of lecture could be helpful to fill in some of these gaps and prepare people for further experience.
2. I would make it longer than two sessions. It felt as if we had just scratched the surface, and that there would have been more fruit if we had gone further, particularly with respect to experiencing sanctification and activation of spiritual gifts. Even developing it into a six session Bible Study including experiences such as visiting other ministries would be something worth looking into.
3. If this were to be developed into a single day workshop, for example as part of a denominational training event, I would reduce the scope of the workshop and focus on lecture that explained the importance of Holy Spirit experience, and its

rich heritage in early revival movements such as the Wesleyan revival. This will hopefully help redeem the idea of Holy Spirit experience from a purely Pentecostal scheme and allow non-Pentecostal Christians to see the relevance and importance of these experiences for all Christians. This would be especially true in my own, United Methodist context.

I look forward to taking what I have learned from this study and applying it to new applications in my context that will hopefully help mainline churches reclaim Holy Spirit experience. Reclaiming this without letting go of valuable characteristics such as a concern for social justice or a tradition of reason will enhance the church's ability to minister to a world that is hungry for genuine spiritual experience.

APPENDIX A
LIFE IN THE SPIRIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Life in the Spirit Workshop Questionnaire

This is the same questionnaire that you filled out at the beginning of the workshop with the addition of the opportunity to add any comments you may have. You don't have to worry whether the answers are the same or not. Just answer the questions honestly as you think and feel about them at the present.

1. What is your age?

2. What is/are your ethnic/racial background(s)?

3. What is your gender?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other: _____

4. What Christian churches have you been part of in the past?

5. How long have you been a part of the present congregation?

Experience

6. I have experienced the following (check all that apply):

Check all that apply.

☐ As I was reading the Bible, I felt that specific words or verses were speaking directly to me.

☐ I have had a spiritual experience that was so overwhelming that I wept or cried involuntarily.

☐ I have experienced falling down or collapsing involuntarily due to the power of God when someone prayed for me.

☐ I have experienced falling down or collapsing involuntarily due to the power of God without anyone touching me or praying for me.

☐ I have heard God speaking to me audibly.

☐ I have spoken in an earthly language that I had not previously learned.

☐ In prayer, I have spoken in a language or uttered words that did not seem like an earthly language.

☐ I have spoken to people about God where it felt like God was speaking through me.

☐ I have felt a deep conviction about my own sin.

☐ I have felt God's love for me in a very real and powerful way.

☐ I have experienced a deep sense of being forgiven by God.

☐ I have been able to speak about Jesus Christ to others with a courage that surprised me.

☐ I have had an experience where I groaned or made other sounds during a church gathering and I could not help it.

☐ I have had an experience of the power of God where I could not move.

☐ I have felt God in such a way that it felt like a weight physically pressing down on me.

☐ I have felt a compassion for other people that seemed to come from God rather than myself.

☐ I have been in a worship setting where it felt as if God was really there.

☐ I have experienced freedom through God from a persistent sin or sinful attitude.

☐ After becoming a Christian, I have changed in my character to have more of any of the following qualities: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

☐ I have been healed supernaturally through Jesus' name

☐ After becoming a Christian, I received an ability related to ministry that I did not have before.

☐ I have encountered a demonic spirit that left me when I commanded it in Jesus' name.

☐ Other: _____

15. I have negative feelings about pursuing Holy Spirit experience.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not negative at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very negative

16. It is important for me to pursue Holy Spirit experience.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not very important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

Additional Comments

17. Please write any thoughts, comments, testimonies, questions or suggestions about the workshop here.

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